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# GINGER SNAPS

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# RUE MORQUE

CANADA'S PREMIER MAGAZINE



## PORTRAIT OF THE WEREWOLF AS A YOUNG WOMAN 10

For slayers Ginger and Dresden, puberty is a hell of a lot like stage shifting. Director John Fawcett and screenwriter Karen Walton reveal why Ginger Snaps will be the best werewolf film you will see in a long time.  
By Paul Goolbsy

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# Note from Underground

**M**ost people think that all films are made in Hollywood, and even though that isn't technically true, it may as well be. Usually, people watch movies fabricated in Tinseltown, and this applies as much to American audiences as anyone else. Especially Canadians.

For the benefit of those of you who do not reside here, let it be known that most of the movies we watch are not Canadian films, but movies made by our neighbors down south. There is a wide variety of reasons for this, but the only one worth mentioning right now is that the Canadian film industry is vastly inferior to its American counterpart in its commercial power.

Which means that we make less films for less money, and that we don't have the kind of promotional budgets to turn our movies into the stuff of huge commercial success. But that doesn't mean we don't make good films and, occasionally, even great films.

For a country that doesn't produce a huge amount of movies, Canada has nevertheless made a name for itself by releasing some of the most thought-provoking horror films ever. It's enough to bring up David Cronenberg, a director whose unusual approach to the genre (*Rabid*, *Melodrama*, *The Fly* and too many others to mention), has made him the country's prime cinematic export and a genre king worldwide. But there are others. Holly Dale's *Blood & Donuts* was an unusual movie about a vampire who scouts late-night donut shops in Toronto, and Mary Harron's *American Psycho* was a smart take on what could have been a brainless hack-fest.

Then there's *Ginger Snaps*. I can count the number of great werewolf films on one hand (for an alternate list, check out the staff's tally on page 13). Two of the best werewolf films ever made – *An American Werewolf In London* and *The Company of Wolves* – got into the idea of a man shapeshifting into a wolf with more than cool special effects. That's also the case with *Ginger Snaps*, a film that mines the subtext of a teenage girl reaching puberty without spoiling the horror of a good werewolf film. *Ginger Snaps* is definitely one of the better horror films to come out of Canada, and yet, I'll be surprised if a quarter of the people who saw *Urban Legends 2* (R55#18) or even *Dracula 2000* (this issue) will ever get around to seeing it. Why? Short answer: money. Long answer: politics.

It's no secret that Hollywood protects its territory like wolves protect their pack. And Hollywood's territory is currently most of the civilized world. Which is why my Canadian peers and I get to go to the local theatre or video store and watch American movies. Which is not a bad thing most of the time, only when we can't see Canadian movies because all of the theatres are owned by American companies showing American films.

Its higher than average quality will probably make *Ginger Snaps* a hit in Canada – certainly we're doing everything we can over here to make it so. And hopefully, when it comes time, American distributors will recognize that a great horror movie has come down the pipe and see to it that it gets promoted properly in the US.

But the onus is on you to get out and see this film, to track it down whenever, wherever it comes out and to make sure you immerse yourself in it. If you're a regular reader of this magazine, you'll have clued in by now that most horror films are crap, some are good and only a precious few merit the term "great". When they get made, we have to shout about it. Consider this a howl.

-RG

rad@rue-morgue.com



Canada's Premier Horror Magazine

## RUE MORGUE

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Design by Gary Pullin

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# POST MORTENT

QUESTIONS · COMMENTS · CRITICISM

Oh, Jason

I love your magazine. The last three issues I've put behind glass and wear gloves before I'll touch them. I had this idea that *Rue Morgue* was about rising horror from the dregs and really examining it as an artform. I couldn't believe it when I picked up a "horror" magazine and could read an article about *Leslie Monty* or *Kierkegaard*, and then was able to turn to the music section and read about death metal and goth without it being stammered. You had the foresight to treat *Bava* like *Truffaut* and the balls to do a cover story on a revolutionary post-modern novel.

So imagine my disappointment at seeing the *Jason X* issue (thanks, Jon O'Brien, for your *Ant-View*). This is the horror cliché most of us hate, and why we lovers of the genre will always be against the ropes when trying to justify its viability. Why did I pick it up? For the *Falst* review of course, but it felt like I was buying a *Hustler*. So if you guys are planning on exploring elements of horror in professional wrestling please don't. Redeem yourself by doing a *Jason Robn* issue.

S.R. Owen  
Minneapolis

First off, I want to say that the new issue with *Jason X* on the cover is great. Having said that, I am coming to the defense of *Friday the 13th*. I am not going to defend my opinion of the series. That's absurd. I want to defend the right for these movies to be made, and why horror media should stop their twenty-year bashing of the series.

Why are fans still having to defend themselves? Why aren't our opinions validated enough for the existence of the series? What is the point of telling fans who have been paying to see the films for twenty years that the films have no value? If people want to see *Leprechaun 25*, then the movie company should make it.

I know after *part one* that *Leprechaun* isn't my kind of movie, but who am I to tell people to stop watching them? I would have never picked up *Rue Morgue* if *Jason* wasn't on the cover. I am a fan of all horror, but it was *Friday the 13th* that really got me interested.



R.I.P.

Issue #19 January/February 2001

Again, I enjoyed your magazine. The DVD reviews, the video game reviews, and articles were great. I will definitely buy any magazine with *Jason*, *Michael*, *Freddy*, etc. on the cover. I will not buy a magazine with an editorial and sidebar column questioning why I like the movies.

Jeremy Young  
Ohio

That's hard to believe. Nice *Friday the 13th* film? There is something about *Jason Voorhees* that brings the audience back for more and more and more. I hope they do come through with that *Jason Voorhees vs. Freddie Krueger* movie. I can't understand why they don't make a movie in which *Jason*, *Freddie*, *Pinhead* of *Hellraiser*, *Michael Myers*, *Chuckle* and the *Screen Killer* all come together in one exciting crossover movie. Hollywood would make a fortune on a movie like that. Anyway, I'll be looking forward to seeing *Jason X*.

Sincerely yours,  
Paul Dale Roberts  
Elk Grove CA

A Match Made In... Hell?

Your magazine is great. I've had a subscription for about a year and a half, and will continue renewing until I expire. I was so glad to finally find a magazine about underground horror, and truly independent cinema.

Ron Dimitrakopoulos Jr.  
Downers Grove IL

Fans Speak of the Devil

I am very happy to have won the *Alice Cooper* prize! THANK YOU for offering it. I am also including a few fliers advertising the all-*Alice Cooper* fanzine that I publish. I would appreciate it very much if you would pass it out or otherwise help me spread the word to anyone you feel would like to know more about it. Thanks a million. If you'd like more information about it, contact me and I'll be more than happy to supply you with all the details. I'm also always looking for *Alice Cooper* items

(especially paper items - photos, articles, even good quality photocopies). Also, if you have/own a business and would be interested in free advertising, let me know and again I'll be happy to supply all the details.

Kenny Miki  
Buffalo

<http://www.kennymiki.com/01mag/01mag/01mag0101.html>



You have a really great publication. I've been a horror movie and *Alice Cooper* fan practically all my life. Your recent interview with the Coop by Aaron Lupato (RM #18) is one of the best I've ever read. I'd love to see you do a follow-up in the future.

Craig White  
Mt. Airy NC

## LETTERS POLICY

We encourage readers to send their comments via email or e-mail. Letters may be edited for length and/or content. Please send to [info@rue-morgue.com](mailto:info@rue-morgue.com) or POST: MORTENT c/o Rue Morgue Magazine 1065 St. Clair Avenue West, 2nd Floor, Toronto ON, M6H 1B4 - CANADA.

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There's a cult film resurgence going on (is close you haven't noticed) and everything under the planet is getting turned into an action figure. I know it the moment I saw the Leatherface doll, but the same holds true for Dr. Frank N. Furter, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show's* original heartthrob from Transylvania. This 7" action figure is like no other: Frank N. Furter comes dressed in cape, garish belt, elbow-length gloves and makeup. The toy stands on a lipsticked red platform, or you can remove it for stand-alone action on your desktop. Frank N. Furter is more like a small coloured statue since the limbs don't move but, far from being a bad thing, it adds a little class to the figurine.

Also available: Rufus the handyman and Columbia the gremlin. Look for series two and three in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* dolls, forthcoming from Vital Toys.com

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The makers insist that every detail has been carefully matched to resemble the head from the film, and it looks like they pulled it off. Take a good look and you decide.

The limited edition piece is currently for sale at Spooky Planet.com Halloween Horror Sager Store. Seek it out under the Limited Edition department, but whatever you do, don't turn out the lights before directing your browser to

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When is a girl like a werewolf?

When she starts to change, according to director John Fawcett and writer Karen Walton.

Here, the two talk about **GINGER SNAPS**, their new **horror** film about sisterhood, puberty... and lycanthropes.

# Portrait of the WEREWOLF As a Young Woman

by Rod Gudio

**V**ampires. Zombies. Werewolves. Watch a horror movie, and the chances are pretty high you'll come across one of these classic beasts. And though they share the same degree of notoriety, the werewolf is the least visible of the three, and by far the most interesting.

The history of horror films seems to bear lycanthropes out. The number of countless zombie films and half-mad vampire movies is legion, but stupid werewolf films are rare by comparison.

Screenwriters have shown an uncanny degree of inspiration when it comes to shape-shifting; witness *The Company of Wolves*, *An American Werewolf in London* or *The Howling*, clearly first-rate films that have taken the werewolf into new territories.

The legacy of thought-provoking werewolf films continues with the April releases of the Canadian horror films *Ginger Snaps*, a *Brothers* movie *The Howling* pairing that chronicles the relationship between two sisters as one of them reaches puberty, and begins a gruesome transformation.

Ginger (Katharine Isabelle) and Brigitte (Emily Perkins) are typical in many ways: they hate the world and everything in it, and they fantasize about ways to commit suicide before they reach their sixteenth birthdays. Only problem is, Ginger—older by one year—feels like his adolescent. One night shortly thereafter, she is viciously attacked by what the sisters first believe to be a huge dog, and as he begins, Ginger's slow transformation into something other than a girl, and something more than a young woman.

Canadian director John Fawcett says he was inspired to shoot his movie because "there weren't very many good examples of really good werewolf films." *Ginger Snaps* marks Fawcett's feature-length debut, though he has dabbled in the genre before, with the insightful horror short *Half Nelson*, yet another coming-of-age movie.

Fawcett developed *Ginger Snaps* with another Canadian talent, writer Karen Walton, who says they set out to make a werewolf movie that broke the rules and conventions of the genre. They succeeded.



“We wanted to do a **creature feature**, but there was also a **metaphor** to be drawn there between **girls coming of age...** and all the atrocities that a body goes through when you become a **werewolf**.”

—screenwriter Karen Walton

*Ginger Snaps* may sound like a trust update on a popular trend of teen horror films, but it's considerably more than that. Fawcett and Walton have crafted a werewolf story around one of the most awkward moments in life: adolescence. They've decided to tell their story through the eyes of two of the most engaging female leads you'll probably see in any horror film. *Ginger Snaps* trends through an awkward memory with the stealthy pace of a wolf, bearing the pain and the humor while keeping every hair-raising thrill intact. Around here, that's blood-drippingly rare.

*Rue Morgue* spoke to John Fawcett and Karen Walton just as *Ginger Snaps* wrapped shooting late last year.

*How did the idea for *Ginger Snaps* come about?*

**Walton:** Basically John Fawcett and I were looking for a project to do together. John wanted to do a horror project and be very much wanted to do a teen girl horror project. I was reluctant to do horror because

I'm a character-driven writer and I don't find horror—at least the hor-

ror I was familiar with at the time—particularly character-driven. We sort of agreed that as long as we could break all the rules and not have a couple of leads running around and killing and depending on men for all the answers, it might be fun.

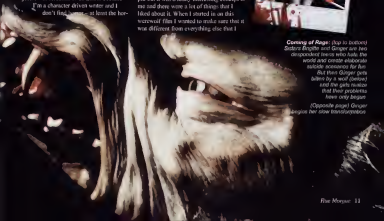
*How did you decide, from there, that a werewolf film might be the way to go?*

**Fawcett:** I knew that I wanted to make a horror film to begin with, but when you start thinking about horror films, you go, “well, if that's the genre that I want to work in, then you have to figure out what kind of a horror film it is.” One of the things that occurred to me was that there weren't very many examples of really good werewolf films. So I kind of thought that that would be something worth tackling. And that also came from the idea that I knew early on that I wanted to do a transformation movie; the idea of someone metaphorizing into something else. I had written a short script way back about a female biologist who turns into a tree. And that sounds really stupid but it was a really interesting concept to me and there were a lot of things that I liked about it. When I started in on this werewolf film I wanted to make sure that it was different from everything else that I



**Coming of Rage:** (top to bottom) Sisters Brigitte and Ginger are two dispendent teens who hate the world and create elaborate suicide scenarios for fun. But then Ginger gets bitten by a wolf (below) and the girls realize that their problems have only begun.

(Opposite page) Ginger begins her slow transformation.



# WOLF BITS

Werewolf: a mythical being who at times changes from a person to a wolf. Later: man-wolf.

## THE FIRST WEREWOLF

Once the God Jupiter sought hospitality in the vicious court of the Arcadian King Lycion, but the king, not believing Jupiter was a God, tried to kill him unsuccessfully. Later, he slit a man's throat and served his flesh up to the God. Jupiter recognized the trick and transformed Lycion into a wolf. "But, though he was a wolf, he retained some traces of his original shape. The greyiness of his hair was the same, his eyes gleamed as before, and he presented the same picture of ferocity."

—Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (43 BC - 17 AD)

## THE GENETIC WEREWOLF

A rare genetic disorder called Porphyria mimics the traits associated with the classic werewolf. Causing a deficiency of heme (one of the pigments in the oxygen-carrying red blood cells) advanced Porphyria symptoms include photosensitivity, discoloration of the skin, thick growth of facial or body hair and sores. As the disease progresses, the cartilage of the sufferer deteriorates, causing deformities at the nose, ears, eyelids and fingers. The teeth, fingernails and flesh also take on a reddish-brown color. Porphyria is accompanied by mental disturbance, from mild hysteria to delirium and manic-depressive psychosis. It is hypothesized that some historical accounts of werewolves could be attributed to Porphyria as well as Rabies.

## UPCOMING WEREWOLVES

### *Blood and Chocolate* (2001)

The story involves a young teenage werewolf who has grown bored of his lycanthropic packmates. A hairy twist on *Romeo and Juliet*, this young girl falls in love with a human and they struggle to make it work.

### *Hungry Like the Wolf* (2007)

The first person story of a female werewolf who lives in upstate New York where she becomes part of a love triangle between herself, a human and another werewolf.

### *Stone Deeps* (2001)

A man recently out of prison discovers that he is the end in line in a long ancestral tradition of werewolf hunters. Now, it's up to him to save his sister and the city of San Francisco from a pack of a dangerous new breed of the fanged threat.

—Mary-Beth Holley



**Blood Lust:** Ginger's amtic growth apart culminates in the murder of the school bully (above) and eventually in the pursuit of her sister (below).

had seen as far as werewolf films go. It was a really big fan of [David Cronenberg's] *The Fly* and I really liked the long transformation over the course of the movie. It's a biological mutating transformation that is progressive and doesn't occur by the light of the full moon.

Obviously, the werewolf also worked with the metaphorical subject of the story. Fawcett: I don't think it's just a metaphor, that's for sure, it is a monster ultimately. We wanted to make a smart horror film, we actually wanted to have a little purpose, we wanted the film to have some meaning. So as a result, I think there are a lot of things in there about adolescence, the idea that Ginger's body is changing, she's develop-

ing new appetites, her hormones are running amok. Because it's a long transformation, it appears that this is a symptom of heightened adolescence but then things start to get even more bizarre than that and it becomes apparent that she is turning into someone else. It is like a biological transformation, it grows from the inside out and where it affects you first is in the way you act before it starts to manifest itself in physical changes. And so that's interesting definitely for an actor and makes it scary on a different level. Ultimately, aside from the fact that there is a monster and a body count, the film is about two sisters who are extremely close and how, at this point in Ginger's life, they are growing apart. That may sound silly but if you took the monster out of the movie that's what you are left with. For a younger sister, change in an older sibling is a really difficult thing to

come to grips with. I supposed if it's going to be a smarter film, it will have to be about the characters first and then about the horror. I'm not trying to say that it's any smarter or different than any other werewolf film, but I guess it is different because it's trying to handle the whole myth of the werewolf in a different fashion.

**Walton:** We wanted to do a creature feature, but there was also a metaphor to be drawn there between girls coming of age and all the atrocities that your body goes through and all the atrocities that a body in theory goes through when you become a werewolf. The werewolf was the most famous transforming phenomenon that we knew about, and it was the best fit to facilitate the story in which you could actually be confused for a minute about whether someone was just becoming normal or was becoming a monster.



ate the story in which you could actually be confused for a minute about whether someone was just becoming normal or was becoming a monster.

**The werewolf in particular has a long tradition in literature and in film. Did you draw significantly from that?**

**Walton:** Oh yeah. We went through the movies that existed that we knew about—that convention was explored. And then I did some research in terms of the history of the werewolf and how it was perceived around the world. And that helped me compile the big list of the traditional "everybody knows this" kind of rules and those were the rules we set out to break. As *American Werewolf in London* was such a cool way to tell the traditional version of the story. We thought to ourselves, now what can we do when it happens to people in a totally different situation? Ginger Snaps is almost a response.

(cover)



# WEREWOLF MADNESS

Despite their high visibility in horror-related books and films, werewolves have been a rare breed among directors working in the silver screen. The upside is that, though they have been rare in comparison to vampire films and zombie films, movies featuring lycanthropes have been considerably better. Universal's *Werewolf of London* got this beastie off to a shaky start and it wasn't until 1941's *The Wolf Man* that the werewolf would get a great reception. Things remained pretty standard for several decades, but later contributions, especially from international moviemakers, have explored the werewolf for its metaphorical value.



**An American Werewolf in London (1981)** Where has the humor in horror gone? This tongue-in-cheek light-footed strikes a perfect balance between screams and laughter. Geoff Naughton captures the lost soul perfectly. Griffin Dunne steals the show as the decomposing, undead smarmy Jack, and Rick Baker's werewolf effects have yet to be topped. A completely original re-telling of the classic werewolf story. Avoid the terrible sequel. -BA

**The Beast Within (1982)** This was a big contender for the gross-out back when it was first released. Today, it's not as well remembered as perhaps it should be: it's the story of a teen with a secret and a boy who has come back after seven-year years because his parents are concerned that he's not all right. The werewolf plot line is handled a little differently, and a strong Southern Gothic element adds measurably to the end results. -RG

**The Company of Wolves (1984)** Neil [Interview With the Vampire] Jordan and Angela Carter used the story of Little Red Riding Hood for inspiration in this werewolf movie that reads allegorically for the most part. The result is one of the most original and unusual werewolf films ever made, with its nightmarish mix of fantasy, fairy tale, nursery rhyme and tale deepening to an evocative collage of horror and Freudian imagery. -RG

**The Howling (1981)** [Released at the same time as *London*] The Howling boasts a massively entertaining script by John Sayles [Matinee] and director Joe Dante [Gremlins] that doesn't pull back on the gory punches. Some prefer *London* to this break-fast, but for sheer volume of werewolves and a subversive wit, *The Howling* is a classic. Besides, you just haven't seen a werewolf film unless you've seen this one. -BA

**I Was a Teenage Werewolf (1957)** American International Pictures and director Gene Fowler cashed in on the 1950s post-war paranoia of mad scientists and human genes pgs in *I Was a Teenage Werewolf*. A young Michael Landon stars as an angst-ridden teen who falls into the hands of a madman and is injected with the essence of humanity's savage origins, which, as the movie proves, are red and canine. A classic. This movie has the somewhat dubious distinction of being the inspiration behind less than stellar fare like *Teen Wolf* starring Michael J. Fox. -AM

**Ravenous (1999)** The werewolf's native counterpart, the werdog, is given some exposure in this top-in-hell-did-a-major-company-ever-approve-this-movie-by-director Antonio Bnd. A soldier in the 1847 Mexican-American war is transferred to a remote outpost in the Sierra Nevada. The outpost's evil is shattered by the arrival of the lone survivor of an ill-fated expedition that ended in murder and cannibalism. Although there are no transformation sequences or literal lycanthropes, *Ravenous* does a good job of minimizing werewolves without actually showing them. Funny story and quite gory. -RG



REVIEWS BY BRAD ABRAHAM,  
ROD GUDINO, MARK-BETH HOLLYER, AARON LIPPON AND NINA MOUDITCHKA

**Santo and Blue Demon vs. Dracula and the Wolf Man (1971)** The title sure it up best. This Lucha Libre film is mindbogglingly entertaining, and even manages to pull a few good scares out of its goofy premise. Not since the halcyon days of House of Frankenstein has a monster smash been such a host, and Santo commands the screen like a young Brando. -BA

**Silver Bullet (1985)** Silver Bullet stars Corey Haim as Marty, a wheelchair-bound boy caught in the middle of a summer of werewolf hell. Based on Stephen King's minimalist novella *Cycle of the Werewolf*, the movie has all the trappings of the time, including a spectacular heaping of thrills. Nevertheless, the film succeeds for the most part thanks to Haim's performance as the demonic Ravennod Love, but gives in at the end to Walt Disney theatrics. Still, Silver Bullet is an entertaining film, even if it is. *The Lost Boys* of werewolf folk. Any movie with a werewolf priest, of course is fine with us. -AL

**Werewolf of London (1935)** Universal's first foray into lycanthropy starred the late Henry Hull as a botanist who is bitten by a man-beast during an excursion in Tibet. A battle between two werewolves over the only known antidote for lycanthropy ensues. *Werewolf of London* has been fairly criticized for clumsy directing and a cardboard lead, but it remains Universal's second best beastie film next to *The Wolf Man*. -RG

**Wolf (1994)** After being bitten by a big black wolf, a publishing executive uses his newfound powers to avenge himself on those who've betrayed him. Directed by Mike Nichols, the all-star cast includes Jack Nicholson (whose wolf man looks suspiciously like Wolverine), along with James Spader and Michelle Pfeiffer. Less gory and more subtle than the regular fare for this topic, *Wolf* relies heavily on slow motion, music, and contact lenses to achieve its effect. -AM

**The Wolf Man (1941)** Remarkably, *The Wolf Man* was a box-office smash when it was first released. Today, the film is renowned for its star Lon Chaney Jr. and his half-of-lame B-movie stunts. Chaney's ape-like performance as the titular beastie effectively eclipses an otherwise unconvincingly good cast including Claude Rains as his unbelievably gay father, and Bela Lugosi who effects Chaney with the werewolf curse. Despite all the hokey acting, the film scores high on atmosphere. Director and producer George Waggoner struck on genius in the purchase of what must have been the biggest tag machine ever. Waggoner's misty Welsh countryside is not to be missed. -BHM

**Wolfen (1981)** One of the more ambitious and provocative werewolf films, *Wolfen* tells the tale of a mythical race of werewolf creatures preying the dawn of man. This film was unsettling in its depiction of a world where man and beast have more in common than we'd like to believe. While muddled at points, *Wolfen* still stands as an interesting film with intelligent sociological commentary, beautiful location filming, and great special effects. -AL





**The Girl Who Was WOLF:** Ginger's transformation developed in stages. Here, makeup artists create a human/wolf hybrid look

*Did you set out to make Ginger Snaps a scary movie?*

**Fawcett:** I'd have to say that I wasn't going out for the cheap scares. I guess I didn't really plan on necessarily making a scary movie as I did want to make a very atmospheric and creepy movie, a movie that gets under your skin. It's not the big startles that are going to have audiences screaming, although I think that there are two or three good ones in *Ginger*. I feel like I have a pretty darn good attack sequence when Ginger first gets attacked and I am very excited about the climax with the monster in the house and Brigitte basically trying to save her life. Those kind of scares, when they are true and real, they're fabulous, but most of the time you can see them coming and that makes them artificial. It's those kind of things I avoid when I think about the horror films I want to make, even though I like to watch them. What we opted for was an unnerving, creepy, atmospheric piece.

**Walton:** I think what's scary about it is that you know full well what's going on in people's heads before they do things, and half the time you're hoping they don't do them. You get to know these ladies quite well, and you start to fear for them because

you're really hoping that they'll grow up and get past what they'll probably do and move on. There's some pretty horrific body imagery in it; what's happening to Ginger is pretty terrifying, you just don't know what's going to happen next. There's also some going bits in there but most of the horror is psychological horror; "what we're capable of doing to each other" horror.

*Jake, you mentioned previously that you considered yourself a horror film fan. What kind of horror films did you mean?*

**Fawcett:** One of my earliest film memories was watching *Koolhaas*, which is kind of a ghost film, but I must have been five or six, my memories are really vague of it. I can't find it on videotape anywhere and I'd kill to get a copy of it! More recent films that I found really unsettling were *Seven* and *Dead Ringers*. And *Dead Ringers*, what is that, a horror film? Well, I thought it was a horror film because I walked away from that and was thinking about it for days after — it just felt like I needed to take a shower every ten minutes. If a film can get under your skin like that then that means it's good, it's effective. And that's why the horror genre is so interesting because it is very visceral and you have to have a reaction to it. You can't sit there and just kind of zone

out or walk away and say "it's alright."

*Horror is seen so much as a ghetto genre. It's hard to get away from that. Do you expect Ginger Snaps will be lumped in with the teenage slasher label or the werewolf label?*

**Fawcett:** It's hard to say how it should be marketed. I know it's not like a teen horror film, but I know that people are going to call it a teen horror film because, after all, what else do you call it? I don't know if it's a good idea to market it as a werewolf film either, because I believe that the reputation of werewolf films is not good. And if I say that I've made a werewolf film, people will just kind of say, [sarcastically], "oh yeah, I really want to run out and see that," because they've seen so many bad werewolf films. So part of me doesn't even want to market it as a werewolf film, but I think you have to, it is after all a monster film, but it's a tricky one.

**Walton:** I didn't write *Ginger Snaps* specifically for teens, I wrote it specifically on hindsight about that experience because, again, the film is a little different from the traditional aspects of the genre. It's not for teenagers, it's about being a teenager and because of that the audience will be a little broader. ■

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# Undead, Undead, Undead

## For Some People, Funeral Is the Fashion

by Valhalla Wiek and Arabella Orange

It's not known exactly when our culture adopted black clothing as a symbol of mourning, but it's easy to see why. The colour black has long been associated with death and cheerlessness, so it's no surprise that black attire was adopted wholesale by the funeral industry, ditto for the early horror movies whose classic monsters – Caliban's Centre, Lugosi's Dracula – always wore black. In alternative fashion, black

clad in through leather as the colour of rebelliousness and subversion.

Everything that black has stood for in fashion seems to have come together in one of the longest surviving youth subcultures, now on its twenty-second year of celebrating the colour black as a romantic nod to death, despondency and all things gothic. The look: flowing black capes and cloaks, fishnet tights and shirts, thin eyebrows, chokers, corpse pale skin. Sometimes referred to as "goth", the style has been associated at one time or another with alternative music, counterculture lifestyle, and popular horror movies and books.

Although it's not hard to identify it, there is more to "goth" fashion than simply wearing black. Like other urban subcultures, the scene is factored into several subgroups, some which emphasize Victorian and Romantic dress, others bondage and fetish,

while still others incorporate glitter, rave-wear and styles identified with names like Modern Primitives and Theatrical Satanists.

The style generally involves tailored/fitted dark clothing (primarily black, but also deep purple, burgundy with white and gun metal as accents), tactile fabrics (velvet, lace, PVC and leather), dyed and highly styled coiffures (anything from black Egyptian cats to blue asymmetry to hair extensions and dreadlocks), silver jewelry (pentagrams, ankhs, crucifix and spider sigils are popular), lots of makeup, fishnets, gloves, nail-polished talons and hard-core boots (Doc Martens, Get-A-Grips, buckle boots or fetish strapons). Men often evoke what's been described as an "androgynous look", but generally this is limited to nail polish or PVC skirts over tights with heavy combat boots.

Most subculture analysts trace the style to 1981, when an infamous London UK nightclub called The Batcave was frequented by



**Death:** Peter Williams and Eve O. from *Shadow Project* used black dress to amplify music from *Dreams for the Dying*. (Above) original photos by Nik Garrett ([www.nikgarrett.com](http://www.nikgarrett.com))





# looks that kill

A FEW NOTABLE ARCHETYPES INCLUDE:



**LESTAT OR LOUIS FROM INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE**  
Ruffled shirt, velvet, opera capes, elaborately styled hair, corset, vest.

**ROBERT SMITH FROM THE CURE**

Ratted up hair, smudged red lipstick, black makeup for eyeshadow.

**SIOUXSIE SIOUX FROM SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES**

Short black ratted hair or a sleek A-line haircut, and the makeup done very precisely with pointed angles.



**DEATH FROM NEIL GAIMAN'S THE SANDMAN**

Designs drawn around the eyes, tousled black hair, always wears an ank.



**ERIC DRAVEN FROM THE CROW**

White face with black vertical lines drawn above and below the eyes, black lipstick drawn extended past the edge of the lips in long smiley face sort of lines, black trenchcoat.

**ANDREW ELDRICH FROM SISTERS OF MERCY**

Sunglasses, short slick black hair, leather pants and jacket with an open shirt.

**BETTY PAGE**

Long wavy black hair with short curled-under bangs, thin eyebrows and dark red lipstick.



**DRACULA**

If you don't know what he looks like, then you're reading the wrong magazine. ☹

"The scene is factioned into several subgroups, some which emphasize Victorian and Romantic dress, others bondage and fetish, while still others incorporate glitter, rave-wear and styles identified with names like Modern Primitives and Theatrical Satanists."

English bands like Bauhaus and Siouxsie & The Banshees. Other bands like Joy Division, Sisters of Mercy and The Cure applied themes of despondency and the look became formally associated with the subculture.

Despite some claims that "goth" is a lifestyle of its own dark transfiguration apart from the music, the fashion sense has been buoyed along as an urban club scene and as such was heavily influenced in the late '80s and early '90s by industrial bands such as Skinny Puppy, Fields of the Nephilim, Test Dept. and Errotazende Neubauten. In the 1990s, artists like Nine Inch Nails, Marilyn Manson and even Madonna entangled the goth look in popular culture as "alternative" fashion. The movies of Tim Burton and Clint Barker, notably *Edward Scissorhands* and the *Melrose* series have also incorporated gothic fashion into their stories. But despite its brief popularity in the mainstream and tumbling along the way, goth fashion remains the property of a tight subculture which continues to romanticize the dark. ☹

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# BUCKETHEAD

## CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE WEIRD KIND

by Gregorius Chant

...ology of original villains like Slip Disc, Aquabot and Double Man, both in the pages of Japanese comic books and in the sonic labyrinth of his music. His deeds are chronicled in albums such as *Guitar Robot and Monsters and Robots* (see Audio Drome - RM#13), both of which resemble a battleground of crazed robotic effects, haywire gadgetry and sixteenth note leads straight out of some video game nightmare. At one point or another he has been joined in the studio by Iggy Pop, Les Claypool and Brain from Primus, Bootsy Collins and Bill Mosley (Onions from *Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2*).

It starts just like a superhero comic: A giant figure looms over the horizon as its shadow falls across the city. It advances with thunderous steps, X-ray eyes glowing only beneath the giant bucket on its head. It brings no harm, only the ethereal sounds in its guitar, sounds harnessed from the psychic energy of dead chickens everywhere...

Right from the very start, Buckethead's invasion of Tokyo was swift and deadly. He became, in the span of a few prolific years, a guitar god of the 21st century and a living effigy to everything cool and strange. Buckethead's true origins started long before that, mind you, but they are just as shrouded in comic book legend.

For starters, he was - like all great superheroes - born in America. Raised in a chicken coop, he watched movies projected on the screen of the drive-in across the road. There loomed

Leatherface and his chainsaw, Johnny Sisko and his giant robot and, of course, Godzilla and his many nemesis. All of them made a huge impression on the young boy, who was inspired to don a Colonel Sanders ten-piece bucket on his head and an expressionless white mask to bide his true identity.

As Buckethead, he inherited a detailed cos-



Buckethead @ home

touring with Guns'n'Roses, of all bands. Despite the high level of visibility, however, Buckethead is unwilling to succumb to the idea that he is anything other than a fleshy visitor on this planet.

He does not speak, not formally at any rate, making him a pretty tough candidate for an interview. Communicating through the machine he knows best, a computer, Buckethead only gave cryptic answers to the many questions we posed him. Nevertheless, we felt we were able to catch a glimpse of the man beneath the bucket.

You be the judge. ☞

### OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT

--Start of Transmission--

Why has it taken you so long for your albums to be officially released in the US?

The labels here didn't seem to have confidence in the stuff. Only the last label, CyberOctave, did, which was very nice.

What motivates you to play with so many different people? Is your solo work still your main emphasis?

To learn. The experience of it too. The solo stuff is always there. Right now not so much.

What would Bucketheadland be like, once you build it?

It has been built for awhile now. So far it is the only park that has rules where you can die and come back to life. There is disembodied music everywhere.

Michael Myers, Leatherface or Freddy Krueger? It would be hard to pick between Michael and Leatherface.

Horror movie music has usually alternated between orchestral scores and rock and roll music. Which do you prefer?

The orchestral stuff. Although *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* has the greatest score and it is neither orchestral or rock. It is called something else, not sure what though.

What can you tell me about the movies you have stored?

Good learning experiences. It was neat to watch Michael Kamen and George Clinton work. So far the most exciting thing was the movie called *American Massacre* which Tobe Hooper's son Tony is doing.

Tell me about your Bruce Lee chucks-a-death routine.

Childhood slaughter.

Favorite horror movie?

*Texas Chainsaw Massacre*.

Favorite invasion movie?

What's that?

Where does your mask come from? Do you feel you are hiding something?

What mask?

2001 must be a special year for you. What's in store for Buckethead?

A lot of digging.

--End of Transmission-- . X

# Dreadlines.

News Highlights  Honor Happenings

## Movie Maniacs 4, Barker, H.R. Giger upcoming from McFarlane Toys

Gotta hand it to Todd McFarlane, the man knows his creepy crawlies. He launched *Movie Maniacs* as the premier horror toy line a few years ago and recently announced expansions to the line during this year's Toy Fair, held in New York City (February 11 - 15).

What you're going to see in *Movie Maniacs 4*, from the sleeper hit *The Blair Witch Project* comes the witch herself, a grisly original rendition (since no one actually saw her in the movie), next up is Chastain, who has been requested since the very beginning and is finally getting his moment in the moonlight, from the upcoming *Jane X* movie, Mr. Voorhees will make yet another appearance in plastic form, this time as the uber Jason you all read about last issue.

Also this time around McFarlane gives us a very Evil Ash from *Army of Darkness* (the coolest one so far), the original Terminator (Arnold fans rejoice!), and both T-800 and T-1000 from *Terminator 2*.

Last but certainly not least, will be a gorgeous boxed set of *Jaws*, a three dimensional replica of the scene we all know and love from the movie (when the old skipper gets chomped in two). Apparently, this is the most detailed boxed set McFarlane Toys has attempted - the shark has been reproduced to resemble the subpar special effects of the time. 18" retoolings of Ash and Leatherface were also unveiled.

McFarlane also unveiled *Turned Souls*, a new line of toys centered around Clive Barker's *Hellraiser*, definitely not for the squeamish. The models are detailed renditions of the images culled from the depths of Barker's most perverse nightmares. Barker himself joined McFarlane in the unveiling of six plastic statues total, take it from us, these things are seriously disturbing. A new era of toy-making has been berthed.

This report wouldn't be complete without mention of a stand-alone diorama modeled after H.R. Giger's *L.A. II*, one of the Swiss artist's most popular biomechanical creations (see RM82). The extensive piece is complicated by four attachable segments (sold separately) that, when assembled, make a small table. The models are coloured in Giger's original flat greys and dull greens and are a genuine match of the painting. Incredible. Further additions to the line will be announced later this year.

Future unveilings at Toy Fair included an upcoming series based around Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* films from



The Fox: From Todd McFarlane and Clive Barker's *Tortured Souls* series

Sideshow Toys, including many of the armies, characters and environments from Middle Earth. Naugul, anyone?

Also, look for the *Silent Screamer 2* series from Mondo Toys, including the robot Maria from *Metropolis*, The Golem, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Barrymore rendition) and the original Edison's Frankenstein.

Of course, we can't help mention all the overlooked horror icons who have yet to make it to toy stardom. Our personal list? But from *Day of the Dead*, The Hitchhiker from *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, Vincent Price as *The Abominable Dr. Phibes*, that creepy doll from *Deep Red*, the goblin truck from *Maximum Overdrive*, Dr. Frankenstein in his rad-ass car from *Death Race 2000* and - how is it he has been overlooked so long? - the Tall Man!

-Emma Anderson and Gary Pullin



An original rendition of the Blair Witch from *Movie Maniacs 4*.

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# Dreadlines.

## ROADKILL

from the  
Info Highway



[www.jason.hardy.com/funbit/](http://www.jason.hardy.com/funbit/)

To date, Horror Movies That Suck offers 119 satirical reviews of the best and worst sucking horror flicks, from *Dead Alive* to *Friday the 13th* (I love you). Additional commentary from Henry the Serial Killer and his labster rising system not to be missed. Check this out, or you suck.

[www.illins.com/illins/salestale/](http://www.illins.com/illins/salestale/)

film dist. 1263.431561.00.html

A group of Bride dolls and their Manns get a bashing in the hilarious seventeen-minute film *Earth Day* which sets them up in a Friday the 13th scenario. Check all of back 'n' slash, toilet bowl drawings and impalements. *Earth Day* is as weirdly effective as it is hilarious. A must-see for the hardcore horror fan fortunate enough to have high speed Internet access...and anyone who ever hated that bitch Barbie. Stars Mark Hamill.

[www.spookyplanet.com](http://www.spookyplanet.com)

This site rates itself as the number one Halloween/Horror site on the web - and it may well be true. Spooky Planet is your one-stop shop for Halloween gear, from life-sized monsters and animatronics to the best horror masks and costumes to be found on the world wide web. Check out our pick in *Needful Things* (page 6).

[www.scifi.com/salestale](http://www.scifi.com/salestale)

SciFi.com is keeping the Cryptkeeper alive with Seeing Ear Theater's audio version of *Tales From the Crypt*. Tim Curry and John Ritter lend their star power to two of the eight episodes recorded so far. Of interest to diehard fans of the famed daytime stories.

[www.hamillfind.com](http://www.hamillfind.com)

Horror people skip Yahoo and go straight to Hamillfind.com. This is the place to weed out the good from the bad and locate anything dark on the world wide web. Over 3000 sites are listed and categorized with subject headings (i.e. zombies, werewolves, etc.) to help you zero in on exactly what you're looking for.

—compiled by Mary-Beth Holley  
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## Film veteran takes a stab at horror fiction

The man once considered to be the busiest actor in Hollywood - 500 credits in a 43-year career - and one of the most overexposed names in the world of B-movie horror, has just completed a new genre novel entitled *That Air Forever Dark*, set in Papua New Guinea.

Headed Dillman, now 70, promises that his new novel of the macabre will be "a terrifying account of the Jet Age meeting the Stone Age - *Deliverance* in a jungle setting." Fithian Press will publish *That Air Forever Dark* this fall. The book is already making the rounds of film and TV production houses, and may soon be optioned as a movie-of-the-week.

"The idea came from a trip a friend took with his wife, a world tour of exotic locations," says the actor-turned-author. "One of the locales was New Guinea and there was a split venue. Those who chose could take a canoe trip up the Sepik River and watch natives imitate their headhunter ancestors in a stag-rag, while the rest could take the islands in the Sky trip to Tim and visit the Huli wigmen."

Long before embarking on his new career as a professional writer, Dillman worked with many of the biggest names in Hollywood - from James Dean in the '50s to Raquel Welch in the '60s. By the early 1970s, Dillman was making increasing forays into the horror genre. One of his best roles was as the doomed Bill Delaney in the Sessue thriller *The Memphis Wife* (1971), with Jacqueline Bisset. Dillman then appeared in Pickman's Model, a popular *Night Gallery* episode based on the famous horror story by H.P. Lovecraft, and he even portrayed a werewolf in the 1972 TV-movie *House of the Wolf*.

"My wolf man movie was extremely uncomfortable, as I was sweating through



Dillman as Phil Grogan in the Roger Corbin produced *Piranha*.

the gha used to paste hair all over my body," he recalls. "In retrospect, I'm amazed how athletic I was in those days, leaping in a single bound from the floor to a tabletop."

Dillman later fought bloodsucking vampire bats in *Chosen Survivors* (1974), a creepy and claustrophobic tale of people under siege while hiding out in an underground shelter after a nuclear war, and was marvelous as a mad scientist in *Bug* (1975), schlockmaster William Castle's last film. Dillman will forever be remembered for his portrayal of Phil Grogan in *Piranha* (1978).

The quality of film and TV roles being offered to the actor declined even further through the 1980s. By the end of that decade, he was appearing in Mexican exploitation flicks (*Gigante: Calt of the Damned*) and in Roger Corbin productions (*Lords of the Deep*). Though he hasn't made a film since the 1992 straight-to-cable thriller *Heart of Justice*, Dillman insists that he didn't retire.

"The profession retired me," he is fond of noting.

—Harvey F. Charrtrand

## Frightvision Gears Up for 2001 Convention

By popular demand, Frightvision will be re-locating to Cleveland, Ohio for its third annual sci-fi, horror and nostalgia convention to be held April 6-8 at the Sheraton City Centre.

The convention, formerly held in Akron, Ohio, will have a huge line-up of celebs this year including: Ben Chapman (*The Creature From the Black Lagoon*), Dick Warlock (Michael Myers) and horror babe Linnea Quigley, not to mention original members of the Alice Cooper band.

And there's more. Frightvision will include a dealer's room (all dealer's tables are sold out), panel discussions, Q&As with celebs, live movies and masquerade contests.

One of the highlights of the weekend will be *Savithian*. Remember, you guessed it, the Wizard of Gore himself blowing up stuff.

Convention organizers Donna and Carl Thompson are extremely pleased to announce that Cleveland radio personality *The Ghoul* (Ron Sneed) will be hosting the event. *The Ghoul*'s radio show *Ghoul Power* has been syndicated throughout the US for the past 31 years and *The Ghoul* himself has amassed a huge following in the horror community.

Check into [www.frightvisioncon.com](http://www.frightvisioncon.com) for a full run-down of events and celebrity appearances.

—Mary-Beth Holley

## Canadian academic wrests Dracula's secrets

When Dr. Elizabeth Miller first took an interest in Dracula, it was as an aside to her study of the romantic poet Lord Byron. A professor of 19th Century Gothic Literature at Newfoundland's Memorial University, she had never been one for tales of the undead, but was quickly hooked on Bram Stoker's famous novel.

"I don't remember if I ever saw more than one or two vampire movies when I was growing up," she recalls. "I was a hard-nosed realist with no interest in the supernatural or science fiction. My interest in Dracula was as a literary text. I found my niche when I realized there was some detective work to be done."

Almost a decade later, her investigations have resulted in three scholarly books about Stoker's famous count: *Reflection on Dracula*, *Dracula: The Shade and Shadow* and *Dracula: Sense and Nonsense*. The latter attempts to debunk the widespread misconceptions that a century of film interpretations and popular trends have left behind. Despite an overwhelming amount of articles, books, TV documentaries and movies about the world's most notorious vampire, Miller points out how little of it relates to the actual novel. (For example, she insists Vlad

the Impaler was definitely *not* the inspiration for Dracula, according to Stoker's actual notes, and regards us that the count was destroyed by a knife to the throat and heart, not a wooden stake.)

This past February, Miller put a group of vampire aficionados to the test when she co-hosted *Reach for the Crypt*, an unusual gothic quiz show scheduled to air this fall on The World, a new Canadian channel. Despite the publicity for her views, she admits that public perceptions of Dracula are likely to hold fast.

"My book is not going to undo all the misconceptions, I know that," she says. "I hope that at least people in the academic community will notice and they'll pass the news along so the upcoming generation will know the truth."

In the meantime, Miller has a new book for those who appreciate the vampire aesthetic as well as its lore. Fairstone Press has published *Dracula: An Illustrated Art Book*, a coffee table book covering bloodsuckers through the ages.

For her part, Miller provides narration about the real Vlad Tepes, vampire folklore, the Dracula novel and vampires in contemporary pop culture. Apart from the usual pic-

## Dreadlines.



Elizabeth Miller at the recent taping of The World's Reach For the Crypt show

tures of bats and Bela Lugosi, the book features some rare images, including paintings of Vlad Tepes gathered from Romanian museums and a drawing of Bram Stoker's wife Florence pencil-sketching on by Oscar Wilde. The book will also be available in French and German translations.

Note: Miller's web site is always updated at: <http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~emiller>

—Lilias Ladouceur

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# What's Brooding...

with *Vulneria Wick*

**GAME: THE SEQUEL** Artists Production Group recently bought the rights to the game *Nightmare Creations*, a third-person horror adventure focusing on the evil time-travelling immortal Adam Crowley. The company is hoping to release the film in 2002. Collision Entertainment, Dimension Films and Abandon Entertainment pooled their resources to buy the rights to the recently-released *Alice* game, which is loosely based on *Alice in Wonderland* (see page 52). Clive Barker recently announced tentative plans to turn his pending PC franchise, *Clive Barker's Undying*, into a movie, comic book and novel.

**LINDA BLAIR'S HELL NIGHT** Rather than create a sequel to the movie *Hell Night*, producer Bruce Cohen Curtis was taken by the idea of remaking his 1981 *Halloween*-clone. "I think for young people who haven't seen [the original], the remake will be a fun movie," he said. "For the older ones, they'll either go and see it or eventually rent it and they can have the two pictures side by side. It'll be fun to compare." The big bonus will be Blair's return to the genre. Appar-

ently, she has been mandated with offers since *The Exorcist* re-issue, but has turned all of them down with the exception of *Hell Night*. This might have something to do with the fact that she was a partner in the original production.

**MORE TV TERROR!** Horror is making a mighty television comeback with United Paramount Network's upcoming blitz of horror television shows. Look out for *Special Unit 2* in the spring, about a team of detectives who track down "missing links" that look like mummies, werewolves and other creatures. *All Souls* (also slated for spring) takes place in a haunted hospital in Boston where strange experiments occur and ghosts roam the deserted hallways. Todd McFarlane has also teamed up with UPN for the production of *The Terror*, and Wes Craven has committed to a weekly series called *Ghost in the Machine*. And if that isn't enough for you, there are also rumors circulating about a series based on Stephen King's *The Dead Zone*. The show is apparently being developed by *Star Trek: Voyager* creator Michael Piller.

**WICKED WEEKEND** It seems obvious that a Web site as successful as *horrorfind.com* would move on to bigger and more beastly ventures like the convention circuit. On August 24 thru 26, *Horrorfind* will launch their first convention "geared towards horror, Halloween and spooky things" in Baltimore, Maryland at the BWI Airport Marriott. *The Horrorfind Weekend* will be packed with celebs and events, not limited to the ubiquitous *Brace (Evil Dead)* Campbell, Doug (Pamhead) Bradley and Dick (Michael Myers) Warlock. Literary superstars Richard Laymon and Douglas Clegg will also appear, among other notables. In between you can catch some run-of-the-mill horror movie action, visit a huge dealer's room and on-site haunted house, or just stare down the beautiful and talented Linnea Quigley (but don't creep her out too much, guys). For an expansive listing of events and appearances, check out

[www.horrorfind.com/show/horrorfind-weekend.html](http://www.horrorfind.com/show/horrorfind-weekend.html).

**ALL ABOARD** The *Dracula Tour 2001* is now taking reservations for their 4th annual adventure to Transylvania. This year, the seven-day tour is scheduled to embark on October 28, so you still have time to convert your blood to cash, and, or, convert it back to blood. Tickets are now being sold for US \$1699 per person, which includes round-trip airfare from New York, deluxe hotel accommodations, meals, transfers, luxury coach ground transportation, and all events, attractions and admissions. Read rave reviews about past vampire vacations, or for any additional information, visit the official website [www.tourandevents.com](http://www.tourandevents.com). To have a free color brochure sent to you by mail, write to: *Tours of Terror* at 315 Derby Avenue, Orange CT 06477. Phone 203-795-4733. E-mail: [DracTour@aol.com](mailto:DracTour@aol.com)

**THE LAST WORD** A big blood-filled congratulations to Robin Whalley of Toronto who told us how much she loved horror and won herself a FREE DVD player, along with a box set of *The Omen* series, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* on DVD and a copy of *The Simpsons' Trick or Treathouse* courtesy of Panasonic, Twentieth Century Fox and *Rue Morgue*, Canada's premier horror magazine!




Linda Blair to come back for more HELL!

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## DINNER'S READY!



## THE GORE/NET

**The Night Caller** Starring Philip Chan, Patricia He and Terry Hu;  
Written and directed by Philip Chan; Ocean Shores Video



Opening with a scene that owes no small debt to the works of *Daso Argenito*, *The Night Caller* begins as a Hong Kong version of the familiar Italian giallo. A mysterious assassin, clad in black gloves and a trench coat, slashes a woman to death as she prepares an evening meal. The young daughter of the victim watches the murder, the killer alerted to her presence when the child's talking doll accidentally goes off. Before this destructive witness can be silenced, a group of Christmas carolers scare the murderer off.

Three cops are assigned to the case, a pair of veterans and a female rookie. Their investigations lead them into the sleazy world of modeling, and as they get closer

to the identity of their quarry a second murder occurs. At this point the film shakes its giallo mantle, reveals the killer, and veers off into a police procedural psychoplay. In a twist of fate, one of the officers is captured and imprisoned by the perpetrator. Chained up, cruelly tortured and facing a grim future, he struggles to survive while the other two detectives, backed by the entire police force, race against time to rescue him and catch the killer.

*The Night Caller* has all the plot twists, hidden motives and surprises of the best giallo. The requisite violence is shocking and brutal, with a few kung fu bravos thrown in for good measure. Deft characterization, solid acting, and universal

As more manufacturers introduce DVD players to the market one welcome feature is the ability to play Video CDs. The VCD format was developed in Hong Kong prior to the DVD format and is as ubiquitous in Asia as VHS is in North America. The multi-format options of these new DVD players open a whole new world of Asian films to the consumer, with a vast catalogue of titles available for less than \$15. VCDs are pressed on compact discs, with feature-length films spread over two discs. In terms of image and sound quality, VCDs are superior to VHS in most instances, but often the crude compression scheme is evident in poorly manufactured discs. Video CDs are available in Chinese specialty shops and through a myriad of online retailers. This issue we take a look at just two of the great films to be found in this format.



themes of friendship and loss make it an engaging film that defies cultural borders.

Made in 1985, and rife with bad fashion and Chinese variations of popular pop abominations of the day, this film isn't without charm, but for fans of the Italian giallo it is an interesting and rewarding deviation on the formula. Ocean Shores presents a full frame print with subtitles logged off at both sides, but their high production standard makes it a good VCD to own.



**The Untold Story 2** Starring Anthony Wong Chau-Sang, Cheung Kam Ching and Paulina Suen; Directed by Ng Yiu-Kuen; Mei Ah Laser Disc Co.

*The Untold Story* is one of the most gruesome of the spate of CM 3 (Category 3, Hong Kong's highest age rating) serial killer films to be made in the last decade. Based on the true story of the Burman, a serial killer who disposed of his victims by grinding them up and selling them in pork buns, this film reached depths of depravity seldom seen.

Cheung owns a small barbecue restaurant in Hong Kong, serving up tasty ribs and chicken to the local clientele. A mild-mannered man, he is constantly teased by his wife, Kuen, for being impotent. When her cousin Fung, a rather attractive country girl, comes to visit from the mainland, Kuen invites her on her husband and pursues her cheating ways.

Before long Cheung and Fung fall in love. Sweet little Fung has a few personality quirks though, she is prone to psychotic episodes at the smallest slight and is intent on replacing Cheung's wife.

When Kuen becomes wise to the relationship between her husband

and her cousin, Fung stabs her to death with a large meat skewer while Cheung covers in the corner.

Faced with the problem of disposing of Kuen's body, Fung gaily dismembers her in the bedrooms, and the following day the special in the restaurant is barbecued ribs. Anthony Wong, the villain in the first film, appears as a good-natured but incompetent detective nicknamed Lazyboots. He soon senses something is not right at his favourite restaurant, after Cheung goes missing.

Other than rehabbing the premise of the first film, *Untold Story 2* is a sequel in name only. As a stand-alone film, however, it's a winner. Replacing the demented bastard Anthony Wong portrayed in the first film with an attractive woman was a stroke of genius, providing the sequel with a villain that is appealing to the eye, yet no less sick than the one in the first film. This particular VCD is widescreen with English subtitles, but isn't the best example of the format, exhibiting many of the effects of compression. Great film, lackluster presentation. B



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# TERROR HAS BIG EYES

鬼眼 RECENTLY RECEIVED ANIME

BY DONALD SIMMONS

## TWILIGHT OF THE DARK MASTER Urban Vision 50 minutes/English Language

It's 1998, and the future looks like *Blade Runner*, complete with flying cars, super-skycrapers and weird sex clubs. Only it's *demons* (not replicants) that need to be hunted down, by a hero who is way less interesting and goofier than Rick Deckard.

A new chapter in the endless battle between Good and Evil begins

when a man matures into a demon in his final's arm (and tears one arm off in the process). The fresh "accident" is apparently the work of yet another Evil Pharmaceutical Company. He wishes and the tries to find him, but ends up crossing paths with Tsunami, a mysterious man also on the case, for reasons more ancient but perhaps not so different from his own. Much flying around and property damage ensues.

*Twilight of the Dark Master* has wicked

visuals, good pacing, decent battle scenes and even a surprise or two along the way, but when the main character is another Inevitable Anime Guy who'll defeat every menacing underling without even moving his hair, it's tough to worry about what'll happen to him. That said, the supporting cast is fairly strong (especially Tsunami's stoic assistant), and it's tough not to like an über-villain who advises our hero to "think globally!"

## BIOHUNTER Urban Vision 60 Minutes / English Language

*BioHunter*'s heroes, Koshigaya and Kameda, are a pair of molecular biologists. Koshigaya likes sleeping with his students, and Kameda's so painfully proper he has to dress up to go for a walk. However, as true *Ghostbuster* fashion, they've got a sideline on investigating the "demon virus," a genetic quirk that mutates its victims with fatal results for innocent bystanders. Failure to learn its secrets seems to be an option once Kameda is infected, and begins to slowly lose the battle to stay human, even though his demon form might be the only thing that'll keep them alive.

The compelling thing about *BioHunter* is that the heroes really are just ordinary guys who have wound up in an extraordinary situation and have to fight just to keep

their heads above water.

The animation — which moves away from the usual stylized character designs for more realistic faces and body types — helps emphasize this (especially Koshigaya's really bad nose-tache). Some depth of character makes Kameda's "half-human, half-demon" angst believable without going over the top, as well as Koshigaya's increasing desperation over his friend's fate.

If *BioHunter* starts smelling bad, the stink comes from the main storyline, which involves a missing psychic, his granddaughter, government traps, and what it all means. It tries to be a mystery, but ends up relying too much on those coincidences to be really satisfying. Still, it's a good hour.

## SWORD FOR TRUTH ADV Films Dual Language DVD/60 Min.

Any film with "The Next..." plastered all over it should be approached with caution, "cause it's a sure sign that the producers have probably tried to rip off someone else's cool idea. *Sword For Truth* may have wanted to be the next *Ninja Scroll*, but boy, in it ever not. Instead, it comes across as a sequence of visuals in search of a plot to hold them together.

The swordsman Sakaki, who sports the fabulously unlucky Seythes of Death on his kimono, is hired to rescue the kidnapped princess of one of Japan's ruling families from a ninja clan, who are using her as a means for the

Ginyu sword. The story starts promisingly enough, once the kidnappers unleash a giant white tiger as a distraction, only to have the beast slaughter everyone in sight. It also features limb hacking action, an army of ninja babes, and one of the highest body counts I've ever seen.

But *Sword For Truth* has so many plot threads that go absolutely nowhere that the final result is incomprehensible. The movie feels like the cherry final part of a much longer story. So far, there hasn't been any news of future sequels. Phew!

## PET SHOP OF HORRORS - VOL. 2 Urban Vision English Language, Two 30 Minute Episodes

Volume one of this first-rate series introduced us to the Count, owner of a store dealing in very exotic pets, and Leon, a homicide detective trying to uncover why so many of the store's customers end up dead. He finds that the Count's true business is providing his clients with their hopes and dreams, as long as they're willing to accept the responsibilities that accompany them. And more often than not, fate is what they end up purchasing.

The stories in the second volume concern a hopelessly tycoon movie star who loves lizards, but gets more than he expects from the one who can love him back. Also along for the ride are a presidential hopeful and his loyal aide who are seeking the Kiria, the mystical sovereign of all animals which

can grant you one wish if it so desires.

*Pet Shop of Horrors Vol. 2* continues the series' top-notch production values and voice acting, as well as the always fun interaction between Leon and the Count, but still comes off less satisfying than the first, which included the moral theme of personal responsibility. The stories of this volume fall more under the category of wish-fulfillment, with the pets helping their owners achieve a destiny (albeit one they might not have chosen) rather than making them face their own mistakes. Far from great, but still entertaining. A



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**MEZGO**



## TWO COURSES FROM THE OTHER "GORE-MET"

### Hannibal

Starring Julianna Moore, Anthony Hopkins and Gary Oldman

Directed by Ridley Scott

Written by Steve Zaillian and David Mamet

MGM/Universal

This adaptation of Thomas Harris' long-awaited *Silence of the Lambs* follow-up was a potential recipe for disaster – controversial (read “test audience unfriendly”) source material, a ham-prone actor reprising an Oscar-winning role, and a director not known for holding back performances. Nevertheless the fates (and Harris, who reportedly exercised extraordinary control over the project) have conspired to better *Hannibal*'s predecessor as both a film and, more importantly, as a horror film.

Often shockingly faithful to the novel, the script once again introduces FBI Special Agent Clarice Starling (Moore, easily eclipsing Jodie Foster), whose recent professional disgrace provokes the interest of the fugitive Hannibal Lecter (Hopkins), now living in Florence under an alias. Her attempts to recapture him lead to hideously disfigured millionaire Mason Verger (Oldman, uncredited and unrecognizable beneath incredibly grotesque Greg Gorman makeup, a vengeful former patient of the good doctor with plans of his own).

To go into greater detail would risk spoil-

ing things for those who haven't read the novel, but there are a few surprises even for those who have – not all of them pleasant. The rumours were true: the book's ending has been altered, though not in the way you might imagine. Despite Hollywood's MPAA-influenced knee-jerk reaction to graphic violence, the book's Grand Guignol moments are present in all their bowel-spilling, artery-spurting, brain-munching

### Manhunter

Starring William Battyman, Brian Cox and Tom Noonan

Written and directed by Michael Mann

Anchor Bay DVD

Sadly, most moviegoers remain unaware that Dr. Lecter's first cinematic incarnation was not *Silence of the Lambs*, but 1986's *Manhunter*, from Harris' novel *Red Dragon*. Dismissed at the time of its release, briefly resurrected at the height of *Silence*'s popularity, it's gathered a steadily increasing cult of admirers in the intervening years.

And with good cause; *Manhunter* is better than *Silence* in every possible way. The film is less concerned with Lecter (here chillingly portrayed by Cox) than the man who captured him, FBI agent Will Graham (the understated Battyman, redefining “intensity” at every turn), whose gift for empathizing with his serial killer quarry – the better to anticipate their actions – has left him with scars both emotional and physical. Pressed into service to stop a family killer called The Tooth Fairy (Noonan), Graham again finds himself face to face with the incarcerated doctor – to seek his insight, and, more critically, to “get the scent back.” But for Graham, getting into a killer's head is not so difficult as getting out.

Anchor Bay's double-disc Special Edition is sure to win the film more fans, though it may also piss off current converts. The “theatrical cut” is spectacular, easily the best video presentation the film's ever had, but contains several scenes not present in earlier versions. More distressingly, it inexplicably omits key moments – a discussion of Lecter's past victims and an important defining speech from Graham outlining his contradictory feelings for his quarry. No mention is made in the info cool booklet (complete with FBI file folder), so this alternate version is an intriguing question mark.

Less noteworthy is the second disc, the nearly unwatchable “director's cut,” a sensory, dark and improperly married job that looks that much worse compared to the pristine main feature. It's an interesting variant, but the real selling point here is the first disc, and it's well worth it. *Hannibal*'s release puts *Soul*, a distant third in the unofficial Lecter trilogy, but *Manhunter* remains the superior of them both.



**Madder Than Ever** Hopkins' Hannibal outgosses its predecessors

—Joseph O'Brien



The Gift: Raimi's sophisticated thriller

## PRESENT, TENSE

### The Gift

Starring Cate Blanchett, Giovanni Ribisi and Greg Kinnear  
Directed by Sam Raimi  
Written by Billy Bob Thornton and Tom Epperson  
Paramount Classics

"Whose woods these are, I think I know... It doesn't take Sam Raimi long to brand a film his own, in the case of *The Gift*, with its establishing shot of gnarled oak trees stretching toward high Heaven from the dead still waters of a misty swamp, it takes him seconds. Dark, mysterious and beautifully sinister forests are signature Raimi: in *The Evil Dead* (1983), walls of trees conceal otherworldly demons; in *A Simple Plan* (1996), they cloak the crash-site of a loot-filled biplane. In *The Gift*, they mask a murder — may be more.

*The Gift* is the story of Annie Wilson, a widow with three children in a backwater Southern town who is both exploited and ostracized for the fact that she has psychic powers. When the investigation of a missing person stalls, the townsfolk reluctantly consult an equally reluctant Annie. Hence the title of the film (which hides its irony well, since not every gift can be a blessing).

In many respects, *The Gift* is a thematic sequel to Raimi's mainstream breakthrough, *A Simple Plan*. Both films are thrillers, and both are character-driven studies of driven characters, isolated within their already

small, rural communities by forces beyond their control. Moreover, *A Simple Plan* starred redneck extraordinaire Billy Bob Thornton, who co-writes here.

The actors themselves are among *The Gift*'s highlights; performances across the board are solid, often great. Cate Blanchett, in particular, shines; there is nothing of the caricature about Annie Wilson, though her psycho-widow-with-a-heart-of-gold role practically demands it (Plus, if Blanchett's Southern drawl was any more legit, I'd have to suspect her of being Meryl Streep's bastard daughter.) Giovanni Ribisi, too, brings surprising depth to the part of a stammering mechanic. And possibly the film's biggest — albeit unintended — surprise is Kinnear Reeves's riveting, scenery-chewing portrayal of a wife-beater.

Ultimately, though, *The Gift*'s greatest strength is its director, at least a true home-ist who knows how to manipulate light and sound to maximum, jolting effect: *Evil Dead* fans — and really, if you're reading this magazine, who isn't? — will thrill to Raimi's brief, effective shots of a witch, a faerie, and a fleshy fiddler, as well as sequences panning down the hallways of Annie's house, and the portentous visit from the spirit of Annie's grandmother.

"Messin' with the devil's gonna get you burned," one character warns early in the film. "Everybody knows that." Well of course we do, Cletis — it's the reason Raimi brought us here in the first place. The joy of giving's all well and good, but this film's truly a pleasure to receive.

—Gary Butler

## COMING SOON: JUNEBUGS

### Spiders

Starring Lane Parrilla and Josh Green  
Directed by Gary Jones  
Written by Stephen Brooks and Adam Garsch & Jake Anderson  
Lions Gate Films



Komodo, Crocodile, Octopus and now *Spiders*: the Giant Monster Animal genre is getting right out of control at Lions Gate Films, evidence of an obsession among executive producers that eerily parallels Full Moon henchman Charles Band's latest midget fetish. The movies in the credits vary from one entry to the next, but all four films appear to have been written and directed by the same person. Environmental hackery (*Military Industrial Complex*, y'accuse!) unleashes freakishly large and understandably pissed off mutant creatures. Said creatures can only be stopped by the ubiquitous Ragtag Crew of Misfits, wacky representatives of the MLC are too busy barking out orders and falling on their faces to be of any use.

The pedestrian-but-agreeable Komodo sports some impressive effects and is far and away the best of a bad lot. Crocodile was directed by dear old Uncle Tobe Hooper, and I'm still sufficiently smitten with *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* that slugging even the least of his works just seems like a sin. Then there's *Octopus*, which was soundly received (and rightly so) several issues back by a certain ex-chorboy-turned-Greco-Roman-wrecker.

And what of this one? Lab needs inject spiders with alien DNA and fire them into outer space for research purposes (???) Spiders grow huge, kill most of the crew and the space shuttle crash lands back on Earth, unleashing sub-D. Who special effects, sub-Rocket Robin Hood writing and the worst use-of-dialogue-as-exposition since *Argento's defense*. It usually doesn't take much spider footage to creep the hell out of a trifling arachnophobe like myself, but *Spiders* caused nary a blip on my anxiety radar — not a good sign. Apparently, director Gary Jones' spidery-serious was on the friz.

And on a personal note, if young Spurling doesn't agree that *Spiders* is even more spine-tinglingly dreadful than *Octopus*, I'll graciously foot the bill for his next five lap dances at the Brisa Rail.

—John W. Bowen

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Killer Snowman: Enough said

## STINKING ON ICE

### Jack Frost 2

Starring Christopher Allport, Eileen Seeley and David Allen Brooks  
Written and directed by Michael Cooney  
A-Pix Entertainment

Popular opinion maintains that most sequels are worse than the originals. But there are those oh-so-rare occasions when a sequel manages to surpass its antecedent in every way. *The Godfather Part 2*, *The Fugate Strikes Back*, *Adams—* and now

*Jack Frost 2: The Revenge of the Mutant Killer Snowman*.

If ever a film merited out for a continuation of its storyline, it was 1997's *Jack Frost* (not to be confused with the schmalzy Michael Keaton dead-dad snowman film)—in which the titular serial killer's prison-bound transport crashes into a tanker truck filled with "genetic acid" (don't you mean "genetic acid"? —Ed.)

He melts down and merges with a snow-bank, transforming him into, that's right, a **MUTANT KILLER SNOWMAN**!

Okay, maybe not a perfect film, but you've gotta give the makers props for sheer pre-

posterousness, and to the valiant cash-whore-runes-you-can't-quite-recall, keeping straight faces while being terrorized by an eight-foot styro-frosty Darringly over-acting its inherently staped elements by behaving as stupidly as possible all the time so the stupid him wouldn't stand out so sharply, it was a film like no other.

Easily the greatest movie about a guy who dies and comes back to life as a snowman ever made, *Jack Frost 2* takes that same approach and runs with it, wisely eschewing the first film's occasional lapses into mean-spiritedness (sorry, cartoon fans, but there's no repeat of *Jack Frost*'s most infamous scene this time around) and focusing on, well, being stupid.

A year after *Jack Frost*'s reign of terror was stopped in the sleepy town of Snow-

monon, Sheriff Sam Tiler and his wife Anne (a returning Allport and Seeley) decide to ally Sam's Yuletide angst with a vacation to a remote Caribbean island. There they once again meet special agent Marmon (Brooks, replacing Stephen Mendell) and a gaggle of twinning calendar models (this is, after all, an exploitation movie). Little do they know that the **MUTANT KILLER SNOWMAN** has been resurrected, and is in the mood for some revenge, Island-style.

As with the first, the production value is limited, and the special effects are special only in the way the Special Olympics are special. But chances are, if you've chosen to watch a movie with the words **MUTANT KILLER SNOWMAN** in the title, you probably know what you're in for. And if you don't, you oughta.

—Joseph O'Brien

## GET THE FUCK OUT

### Zombie Bloodbath 3

Starring Abe Dyer and Curtis Spencer  
Directed by Todd Sheets  
Written by Brian Ekland  
Evilstar Productions



Dy, that crazy title, man? With such a succinct appellation one might expect a clichéd and brainless gorefest, but *Zombie Bloodbath 3* is a little more inspired than the title suggests.

The set-up for the titular zombie carnage is certainly one unique to this particular sub-genre. In the near future a war against alien invaders is won when the US government deploys unstoppable flesh hungry zombies in battle. With the enemy now vanquished, there remains the small problem of disposing of the indisposible. The undead horde are herded into a container and freed into deep space. Things go awry when the container is sucked into a black hole and coughed up back in time in the basement of the Miskatonic High School. Two students running the campus radio station discover the charlie

from the future and inadvertently open the container of zombies, unleashing the promised bloodbath. Typical zombie mayhem ensues, all cheese gone, bad makeup and George A. Romero references, but a healthy dose of imagination and a few twisted genre conventions make *Zombie Bloodbath 3* a singular addition to the low-budget shot-on-video zombie film canon.

There is much to like here. The low-fi digital effects used in the space sequences are charming in their DIY-ness and the gore effects are so disgusting and crass as one would expect. The problem with this film is the dialogue. The excessive use of the word "fuck" by the cast is nothing but irritating. There are dynamics among the characters that are interesting but hopelessly mired by a deluge of vulgarity. Nasty minutes of people shouting obscenities at each other neither advances the plot nor develops the characters. Nevertheless, this film is a fan gorefest and should be applauded for being better than it has any right to be.

*Zombie Bloodbath 3* is available through the official website at <http://www.zombiebloodbath.com>.

—The Gore-met

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## DALI DOES DARIO

### Desecration DVD

Starring Irma St. Paul, Denny Lopes and Christine Sanford

Written and directed by Dante Tomaselli  
Image Entertainment

Recently, a few small wonders like *Blair Witch* and *The Last Brethren* have rescued the phrase "low-budget independent horror film" from becoming a truly dirty word, but it still doesn't usually inspire the greatest confidence that what you're about to watch isn't a corn-infested pile of direct-to-video trash. But every so often you're treated to something that is so much more than it probably should have been, and you're reminded of a time when the word "style" meant as much to a director as it did to the costume designer.

Enter *Desecration*, the twisted supernatural exploration of a young boy's personal hell from first time writer-director Dante Tomaselli. With \$150,000, a single 16 mm camera, and a whole lot of balls, Tomaselli has aptly crafted his own short film into a full-length zanelethic nightmare voyage into the mind of a cursed Catholic boy haunted by the memory of his mother's sudden death.

The story surrounds the ghastly chain of events terrorizing young Bobby (Denny Lopes) after he accidentally wipes out a nun with his model airplane. Through a series of dream sequences à la *Jacob's Ladder*, Bobby discovers that, for reasons left open-ended, the ghost of his dead Mother is trying to use him to escape from hell. What we don't really know is why she's there in the first place or how she plans to do it. But that's pretty much just pointless detail—the Euro horror influence in *Desecration* is unmistakable.

Dialogue takes a back seat to the rhythmic soundtrack and pulsing sound loops created by Dante's brother Michael. Vivid color schemes and dazzling imagery compensate for a plot that's either too convoluted to follow or just weak. But the overall result works in the sense that you don't so much watch a movie like this, you feel it. It's a nasty, powerful vision born of an obvious passion for the material and love for the genre.

In that sense I can forgive the occasional over-indulgence of art-house sensibility. With a little more space I'd tell you about two sedately creepy goblin crows and the hairily hilarious cough of Bobby's grandmother, so you'll just have to trust me on that.



*Desecration: ghastly surrealism*

But like *Blair Witch*, *Desecration* does a lot with very little. It just does it in a very different way. I'm anxious to see Tomaselli's beautifully twisted imagery tossed up against a storyline. I certainly can't question the man's potential as a future maestro in the kingdom of surreal/atmospheric horror. *Desecration* is easily the best European horror flick ever filmed in New Jersey.

—Tom Dracomic

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Spanish Zombies From Anchor Bay's  
Let Sleeping Corpses Lie remake

## DAWN OF THE DEAD

### Document of the Dead DVD

Starring George A. Romero and

Toni Savini

Written and directed by Roy Frankes

Synapse Films

First released in '89, now on DVD, *Document of the Dead* is a straightforward exposé loosely aimed at aspiring independent filmmakers and genre fans alike. In a nutshell, director Roy Frankes tags along with George Romero, Toni Savini et al. during key moments in the production of *Dawn of the Dead* and *Two Evil Eyes*. Compiled from interviews and behind-the-scenes footage, Frankes works entirely from a mid-audience perspective and lets the subjects speak for themselves about the pitfalls of indie horror production at the turn of the '90s. However, the premise only really serves as a convenient theoretical backdrop to what Frankes really wanted to get out of the project, a chance to hang out and shoot the shit with George Romero!

Sure, some so-called real documentary filmmakers might try to editorialize here and there. They may have addressed the themes of capitalism, consumerism or conspicuous consumption so often at the heart of Romero's best work. They might have even attempted to reference the films culturally or cinematically, but Frankes, an obvious fan of genre George, just seems happy to be along for the ride.

Along the way, Romero breaks down his back 'n' slash editing technique and prattles about moviemaking in smaller cities like home town Pittsburgh. Personally endearing and professionally articulate, Romero stands



## MORE VINTAGE EUROGORE FROM ANCHOR BAY

### Let Sleeping Corpses Lie

Starring Ray Lovelock, Christie Galbo and Arthur Kennedy

Directed by Jorge Grau

Written by Sandro Continenzi and Marcello Coccia

Anchor Bay Entertainment

Despite the period (1974) and paucity of origin (Spain), this near-forgotten gem soars above the rest of those beautifully photographed but idiotic and incoherent European gorefests enjoying a revival these days. Initially released under a host of different titles (including *The Living Dead at Manchester Morgue* and *Don't Open the Window*), *Sleeping Corpses* is now available uncut, digitally remastered and letterboxed in 1.85:1 aspect from Anchor Bay. This edition also includes TV and radio spots, a poster gallery and an interview with the film's charming and even-slightly eccentric director Jorge Grau.

Faithful to its zombie film ancestry, *Sleeping Corpses* has the dead reanimated (and, of course, carved) by way of radiation emitted by some sawtoothed farm machinery. Travelling companion George and Edna (Lovelock and Galbo, respectively) stumble into the midst of the carnage but have some difficulty convincing authorities that George didn't actually commit the murders himself. Hence, here and here we wind up on the run from both the living

out on the Everyman who continues to embody all that a true horror filmmaker should be. And, not surprisingly, he groans when questioned about the peaky proposition of preserving artistic cohesion against the bottom-line mentality of pinhead studio executives.

Of course, we all know that producers care more about the filthy lucre than the celluloid itself, and finding distributors for an X-rated movie isn't exactly a walk in the park, so the real charm of *Document* is in the rare opportunity to watch some of horror's undeniable masters at work. "When there's no more room in hell, the dead will walk the earth!" warns the original tagline from *Dawn*. I wonder if George knew all along they would eventually find cushy jobs as so-called studio execs.

-Tom Dragoimir

dead and cartoonishly tough cop Kennedy. The film isn't completely free of snags; the set-up is admittedly contrived, the pacing slow and Kennedy's Irish accent is about as convincing as David Duchovny feigning Jamaican patois, but Grau and the screenwriters compensate by showing considerably more respect for continuity and coherence than most of their Eurohorror peers.

The virtually unprecedented gore content of *Sleeping Corpses* (not least the infamous tom-off [in scene] certainly drew its share of righteous indignation from citizens and censors alike upon the film's release, resulting in multiple cuts, all of which are happily restored here. *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* may well have been the outrage du jour in '74 - and admittedly, it remains a vastly superior film - but Jorge Grau doubtless deserves props for breaking taboos and opening the door for later efforts by Umberto Lenzi, Ruggero Deodato, Lucio Fulci et al. Fall to your knees, Gore-met, and give thanks!

-John W. Bowen

## SURREAL ESTATE

### Q:Dead DVD

Starring Kai Fajwiers, Kambika Mesegueres and Kanj Naga

Written and directed by Kai Fajwiers

Synapse DVD

I'm thinking about proposing a new labelling system for movies - "May be too intense for younger viewers" or "Contains graphic violence" just don't seem adequate to describe films like *Q:Dead*. How about "May be too intense for adult viewers"? "Contains unsettling, disjointed storyline"? Actually, "You will get wet on this ride" probably best sums things up - there's nary a scene that doesn't contain dismemberment, self-surgery, geysering bodily fluids or other extremes of anatomical mayhem.



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**Organ:** Too much, even for the Japanese censors

A fairly straightforward set-up finds cops Namata and Tosaka investigating an underground organ-trafficking operation run by one-eyed villainess Yoko (Tetsuo's Fujiwara, who also wrote, directed, production designed and probably catered). After a brutal confrontation in a makeshift surgery, Namata escapes, but Tosaka is wounded and captured by the harvesters....

At this point the narrative explodes into a

near-random assemblage of recurring, vaguely-related vignettes. Multiple plot lines unfold in the aftermath, spawning increasingly bizarre subplots and characters along the way, an uneasy approach that treads the line between nightmarish surrealism and maddening incomprehensibility.

Namata, driven half-mad and kicked off the police force, continues to search for his missing colleague. Meanwhile Tosaka, sans arms and legs, has wound up the experimental guinea pig of Yoko's biology

teacher brother Jun – the victim of a grotesque abdominal tumour, with a penchant for raping and murdering his female students. Meanwhile – well, suffice to say this film has a lot of meatwhites, and they're all equally twisted and horrifying. More personally, Fujiwara interpermeates her film with moments of strange, quiet beauty – Jun's hallucination of a butterfly-winged woman emerging from a cocoon brings a particularly

amazing standout.

*Organ* is Fujiwara's first film as a director (after a series of reportedly equally strange stage productions), and as such, tends to wear its influences on its sleeve – Tarkenton to most obviously, as well as Japan's two favourite Dadaists, Lynch and Cronenberg (one character even makes reference to *The Fly*). Even the normally violence-tolerant Japanese censors had some trouble with this one (though how you'd even start without cutting the running time to less than thirty seconds is a mystery). Synapse's DVD presents *Organ* in its original uncensored form. The extras are slight, but do include a promotional short for (God help us) *Organ 2*.

**Joseph O'Brien**



## MASSACRE IN TEXAS: THE DOCUMENTARY

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre:

A Family Portrait Revised DVD

Starring Gunnar Hansen, Edwin Neal,

Jim Seidow and John Dugan

Directed by Brad Shalady

MTI Home Video

It's hard to believe that one of the most notorious horror movies ever made would be the subject of only one documentary, even after twenty-five plus years of superstar notoriety. Equally baffling: that the documentary turned out to be so sloppy, despite more than good intentions and some solid interviews.


That was *A Family Portrait*, a film that was released a few years back which aimed to get a look at how director Tobe Hooper and his cast of so names managed to strike such an uncivil chord with humanity at large. The problem was that documentarist Brad Shalady couldn't get hold of Hooper and the remaining cast members plodded through an hour on the strength of their anecdotes and wary at-oukase in sight.

I suspected that *A Family Portrait Revised*

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of would set out to right a lot of those wrongs, throw in some much needed visuals and generally bloody things up a bit. Unfortunately, *Revisited* is the same dang thing over again, only now it's digitally remixed and re-mastered, so that Jim Siedow's mic can be heard in stereo as it scrapes across his stubble everytime he moves his head during his segment of the interviews.

In its defense, *A Family Portrait Revisited* does offer some great anecdotes from Gurner "Lutherface" Hansen, Edwin "The Hitchhiker" Neal, Jen "The Cook" Siedow and John "Grundle" Dugan. Their candid interviews throw some light on how the movie came together and also introduce a little about its creator - Hooper himself - whom we only glimpse through Neal's hilarious imitations. Also, there are a few deleted scenes and one small outtake, but all of these collectively take up about three minutes of screen time. The rest is spent showing the interviews interspersed with occasional footage from the movie.

I'm a really big fan of the *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and I don't want to belittle Siedow's effort, obviously he had the right idea and he managed to throw some light on the making of a horror classic. But his film will only appeal to the most diehard fans as a documentary with its heart in the right place and little else.

—Rod Gulino

## OF DRIVE-INS, DRUGS AND THE DEAD

Mutant DVD

Starring Bo Hopkins, Wings Hauser and his weird front teeth

Directed by John "Bud" Cardos

Written by Peter Z. Onton, Michael Jones and John Kruse

Elite Entertainment

Dang — nothing screams "B-movie!" quite like Bo Hopkins and Wings Hauser sharing top billing. If Marjoe Gortner and Jim Michael Vincent had shown up, this could have been a regular samurai meeting.

I'd never actually seen *Mutant* prior to reviewing this DVD release, and yet I felt strangely familiar to me — and no, I'm not just referring to the zombie-flick-by-the-numbers plot. Two road trippin' brothers (Hauser and Lee Montgomery) get run off the highway by rednecks and have to hang out in Standard Issue Southern Hick Town, U.S.A. until they can get their wheels fixed. Meanwhile, toxic waste is slowly turning the locals into maddened zombies and... um... well, that's about it, really. All the archetypes are present and accounted for: Hopkins is our Cynical Cop while Judy Medford pulls Beautiful Physically Helpless Female duty.

Director Cardos really has a hard time generating more than sporadic tension throughout *Mutant*, and hey, it's not like we usually ask much from zombie films. You know how it is — give us gory murders, shattering decomposed corpses and perhaps a smidgen of nudity and we're happy, right? Not exactly the tallest directional order, right?

Still, *Mutant* retains that needy, pedestrian charm exclusive to B-horror films that date from the last days of the drive-in era. *Fear No Evil*, *Hannibal*, *From the Hip*, *Xtro* and *The Thing* may have been crap, but they didn't seem so bad when you and a bunch of your friends were warded into somebody's parents' station wagon and everybody had a skull full of cheap n' nasty chemicals. Filtered through that particular haze, these films are still undeniably awful, but the nostalgic factor renders the reviewer incapable of making any really harsh judgments. In short, *Mutant* is unlikely to scare the shit out of anyone, but if you're (cough!) past a certain age, it may put a wistful smile on your face for reasons you'd rather not admit.

—John W. Bowen



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# CINEmarquee

VINTAGE HORROR REISSUES

## BLOOD & POPCORN

### Screaming Skull 1958

Starring John Hudson, Peggy Webber and Russ Conway

Directed by Alex Nicol

Written by John Kneibuhl

### Attack of the Giant Leeches 1959

Starring Ken Clark, Yvette Vickers and Jan Shepard

Directed by Bernard L. Kowalski

Written by Leo Gordon

Drive In Discs/Elite Entertainment

I am certain there is no shortage of people out there who lament the demise of the drive-in. Think escalating costs, diminishing audiences and home video for the end of an era in North American culture. But while crude sound systems, shoddy projection and overpriced concessions have given way to DTS, state of the art facilities and even more overpriced concessions (at least some things never go out of style), the experience of actually going out to a movie has changed little.

In the drive-in era, the horror and science fiction films would prove to be the most popular; films like *The Screaming Skull* and *Attack of the Giant Leeches*, never particularly good films, mind you, but fun in their own way. Often tedious, with cheap monster and atrocious acting, these films benefited greatly from the drive-in experience. Subsequently, Elite has issued the first volume in a series of drive-in double bills on DVD, stacked with extra features.

*Attack of the Giant Leeches* details what happens when the back incidents of a backwoods town disappear mysteriously (I'd have thought living in a backwoods back

town would be enough justification to up and leave). Only when local sheriff Sarge (Clark) discovers the sinister bloodsuckers festering in the local swamp does he learn what happened to the missing townsfolk. The second half of the double feature is *Screaming Skull*, the tale of husband Eric (Hudson), trying to drive his unstable wife Jenni (Webber) into a nervous breakdown. It seems that wife has amassed a large fortune (isn't that always the case) and her going gaga will make Eric a wealthy man. Of course things don't go as planned... what do you expect with a film called *Screaming Skull*?

Each film clocks in roughly at an hour each, thus making the somewhat pat stories play quite well. Of course the fact that these were both AIP productions pretty much telegraphs what you're getting into. Yes, they're cheap, but lots of fun, and they actually contain some horrific moments.

What sets this collection apart from the rest is the extra features supplied with the disk - a treasure trove of commercials and other entertainment that you would have



**Creature Feature:** Elite pays tribute to the drive in fever of the late 1950s with a bonus double bill on DVD

seen as part of the standard drive-in program. This collection crosses over into pure genius, though, with the special *Dinero* Sound secondary audio track. Utilizing only the left channel of your sound system, the other channels play a steady stream of background drive-in noise - car doors opening and closing, children playing and horns honking. And kudos to Elite for including the original film posters on the cover... they add significantly to the fun. May I strongly recommend you view the films and supplements as one screening? (One of the options this DVD presents.)

I'm sure DVD maniacs will complain about the washed out film prints, but to do so misses the point: drive-ins were never a THX Approved multiplex. They were a lazy summer evening at the cottage and a Saturday night in town. They were where an entire generation fell in love, and fell in love with the movies.

-Brad Abraham

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# OD in COLOUR Comics by Gary Butler

"S he dies" Lord knows that the ad campaign building up to the release of the hundredth issue of *Spawn* wasn't subtle, but for a book that from the get-go has always revelled in excess — melodrama, ultra-violence, and layout-defiant action — it couldn't have been more appropriate. (Addendum to excess: six different covers for this double-sized issue alone!)



The over-the-top nature of the campaign in question was the excess of choice. *Spawn* #100's promise to blood-thirsty fandom was one, single death, but the ad offered five female protagonists: Tiffany, Gmery Blake, Wanda, Cyan and Angela. Granted, she dies, but whose number was coming up in this round of wheel of fortune? Ah, Angela, kicking around — and kicking hellpains butt — since issue #9, but we hardly knew ye. Of course, if an angel warrior's going to buy it, there aren't too many ways to go more honourable than the sacrifice route (and a double sacrifice at that).

Shameless market manipulation aside, *Spawn* #100 delivers, and with a strong sense of finality. *Spawn* finally fights to the death with Malebolgia, he finally discovers the true nature of his role in Hell's kingdom, and Cogliostro finally gives him some advice that he can use. As for the finality in Angela's death — after all, events like this are undone in coincidence every second year — not only does she take a spear through the spleen to save *Spawn*'s life, but her Earth-bound spirit freely transfers its own life force to a comatose Wanda. Our tear-jerking money says she's gone for good.

Speaking of which: where does *Spawn* go from here? Issue #100 is perhaps most notable for bringing fairly satisfying closure to one of the most doggerel storylines in

comic history. If Todd McEl's smart, he'll avoid getting bogged down in *Swamp Thing*, a hero whose award-winning book became more about his power than his character. The "next issue" box for *Spawn* #101 promises "new villains, new characters and new twists on old favourites" — so start holding your breath now.

Taking itself quite literally, *The Names of Magic* finds DC's favourite teen mage unbarbing on a quest to learn his own, well, name. It seems that "Tim Hunter" is as good a handle as any for the domain of mere mortals, but as the boy's newest benefactor-com-bodyguard informs him, Tim can't progress until he learns his real cognomen.



But literature proves to be an introductory story's undoing. Issue #1 concludes with Tim trapped outside a magic institution called the white school, whose door refuses to open unless he utters his "true name." Dramatic pressure comes courtesy of two gun-toting lackeys from the latest mysterious evil agency that has decided that Tim must either be converted to the dark side — or die!

Can this series plot its locus out of the popca? Writer Dylan Horrocks compensates for his poorly executed,

obligatory "freaky four" scene (with Constantine, Phantom Stranger, Mister E and Dr Fate) by introducing to the series a charismatic new Hunter-barter in the evil mage Singleton. On the other hand, writer Richard Case (best



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## IN THIS ISSUE...

### SPAWN #100

By Hellboy, McEldine and Capullo  
IMAGE

### THE NAMES OF MAGIC #1

By Horrocks and Cap  
DC/VERTIGO

### DAREDEVIL: SPIDERMAN #3

By Jenkins and Winkie  
MARVEL/MARVEL KNIGHTS

### LADY DEATH: TRIBULATION #2

By Kaminski and Rait  
CHAOS

### PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES

By Malmgren and Murray  
HARDCORE COMIX

known for his *Doom Patrol* with Grant Morrison) seems to have forgotten that back-guards exist. Time will tell if we're bored by this spell.

Increasingly impressive on a monthly basis is Marvel's entire *Marvel Knights* imprint, whose roster includes the company's magic and supernatural characters (*Ghost Rider*, *Dr. Strange*) along with its urban vigilantes (*Daredevil*, *Punisher*). In the penultimate issue of the *Daredevil-Spiderman* miniseries, the daring duo confronts the prison-broke "Gang of Four" (Silkman, Gladstone, The Owl and Copperhead) in Hell's Kitchen. The ensuing twenty-page brawl is chock full of classic, kitschy DD and Spidey dialogue as well as great two-bit characterization for the ragtag group of second string villains. But it's the ending that's worth the price of admission, as DD's radar sense makes him realize what's been bothering him about Copperhead, which is



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Catfight! Vandalis and Lady Death go head to head in a wrestling match for the boys.

not that DD can, but rather that he can't hear the villain's heartbeat. With Copperhead unmasked on the final page, the supernatural twist in this comic climaxes with the best of them (Dead man walking, anyone?)

Chaos! should really consider changing its name to Catfight! The latest *Lady Death* miniseries features more babes, boobs and battles than any of the company's titles to date, bar none, and the twist this time is that it's every well-endowed woman warrior for herself. In *Trials* #2, LD dukies it out with Vandalis, slated for issue #7 in LD vs. Pangloss and Nocturne's

return from the dead at the beginning of the storyline can only mean more screams, giggles and jello-wrestling for the grand conclusion.

The backstory LD must prevent an eternal night from descending on the earth, but needs a boost from Vandalis's new-found light power. When Vandalis refuses, the gloves come off and the fingernails start flying. If you always thought Thor had too easy a time leading and not enough convoluted mythology, this is the book for you.



Hardcore music fans have often been compared to zombies in terms of their mindless idolatry. *Plague of the Zombies*, a solid, self-contained one-shot, takes this concept to the next level by twisting the zombiefication process and making it a function of music itself. When DJ Johnny Midnight — a Clash, Korn and Catherine Wheel fan with a penchant for porn — takes a fun call from "Balthazar, Leader of the Damned" and agrees to play a local band's demo, he doesn't suspect that he's a puppet in a grander scheme. (C'mon — would you?)

Of course, no zombie story is complete without gore-oglesy, which comes part and parcel with this particular "plague."

NB: Similar resemblance to a certain Hammer horror classic is purely coincidental. For info (it's indie), contact [hqfiles@netcom.ca](mailto:hqfiles@netcom.ca) &



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# THE LAST CENTURY IN HORROR SILVA COLLECTION IS GOLD STRETCHING THE LIMITS



## Horror of the 20th Century Robert Weinberg Collectors Press

I've always wanted a book like this one - heavy, coffee-table sized, crammed with rare, colorful pics and informative writing. And Bob Weinberg was just the person to write it. A veteran of the genre, Mr. Weinberg has a coveted collection of horror-related art and paraphernalia dating back thirty years. His book benefits hugely from his personal stash, covering horror from its earliest roots in the Gothic novel, and following it through into the 20th century explosion of films, comic books, magazines and videos. The only thing he missed (and apparently it was deliberate) is horror in music.

*Horror of the 20th Century* more than lives up to its name, however, precisely because of Weinberg's impartial, scholarly writing and his insight and obvious love of the genre. His book went a long way to contextualizing some of horror's most-read names, people like H.P. Lovecraft, Clive Barker and Stephen King, alongside their lesser-known peers. Along the way he finds time to uncover the golden age of the shudder pulps, the horror comic boom in titles like *Wend Schauer* and decades of soft-cover horror paperbacks. Weinberg doesn't miss



works of importance - James' *The Turn of the Screw*, Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and Blatty's *The Exorcist* are identified as well as the fads they spawned. Not least, *Horror of the 20th Century* sheds light on some less than notable aspects of the genre, notably Christian horror, whose *Left Behind* series has outsold the second tier of contemporary writers.

Weinberg's insight into the genre is given plenty of space and it doesn't hurt that *Horror of the 20th Century* is one of those books in which the illustrations are worth a million words. Any serious collector worth his blood will avail himself of this tome of dark goodies.

-Rod Gudino

## Through Shattered Glass David B. Silva Gauntlet Press

*Through Shattered Glass* is a superb collection of short stories. A truly skilled fantasist is able to extract the chilled essence of his personal darkness from the lives of ordinary people, something Silva accomplishes with stunning dexterity in this collection.

Silva has no need for trendy post-horror landscapes. His stories occur in small towns, on farms, in children's bedrooms and moth-



ers' kitchens, in condemned buildings. The heroes, and anti-heroes, in *Glass* are men, women, and children culled from a populace that anyone would recognize, and the stories they inhabit are shaped by their alchemical reaction to the horror that they visit on each other, and find visited on themselves.

At the risk of employing the overused expression "quiet horror", this is a book for the thoughtful reader who savours mood and language. The true glory in this collection, though, is a current of poignance and humanity that flows through the lives of Silva's characters, setting off their terrors like cream sets off the richest black coffee.

Haunting is a persistent theme, literally and not. In *Dry Whiskey*, a farmer's son finds his beloved, alcoholic father so haunted by his memories when he quits drinking that he kindly "drives out". In *A Time To Every Purpose*, two men find their adult lives haunted by a power one of them acquired as a child, which enabled him to rearrange time itself, opening invisible portals and pushing people through them, with troubling results. In this story, Silva asks us to consider whether shared knowledge can make an innocent boy a monster by association, and the answer is deeply disturbing.

My personal favourite is *Alone Of His Kind*, a powerful and moving story of what



The Outer Limits: A Thelma alien takes its first baby steps

a man will go through to bring back his beloved, what he will give up, and at what cost.

Silva's *Shattered Glass* is a gift to the reader: what we see reflected back is our own face, brilliantly refracted through the prism of the author's tenebrous, elegant literary vision.

—Michael Rowe

## The Outer Limits Companion

David J. Schaw

GNP/Crescendo Books

It is one of the great tragedies of our time that *The Outer Limits* will forever be second banana to *The Twilight Zone* in the public consciousness. More *Zone* episodes are remembered as classics, and who out there can't hum its famous theme? Yet *The Outer Limits* was a thought-provoking series that featured brilliant stories, fantastic stars and the most alien film beasts seen on the small screen (take that, *Star Trek*!). What *The Outer Limits* proved over thirty years ago was that it was possible to tell intelligent, thought-provoking science fiction stories in

the commercial television format (a shame that these thirty years later we have yet to see its equivalent—*Frankly, I'm*, anyone!).

Fortunately for fans and neophytes alike, there is David J. Schaw's *The Outer Limits Companion*, a heavily expanded and updated reprinting of an earlier 1986 edition. This astonishing, in-depth look at the development, creation, production and legacy of this series and those who worked on it is a fantastic resource detailing the original show's run and subsequent resurrection in the 1990s.

First and foremost, *Companion* is a close look at the history of this very influential program. Featuring exhaustive biographies of the key players—namely show creators Leslie Stevens and Joe Stefano (who also

co-wrote *Psycho* for the screen)—and examinations of the making of each episode, from cast and crew perspectives to controversies and disputes, this book delivers on every conceivable level. While many of the key players involved in *The Outer Limits* are still with us, others—notably creator Leslie Stevens—have passed away. But their thoughts and anecdotes on its creation are still preserved in this reprint.

I could go on, but that would take valuable time away from your purchasing and reading this fine tome. *The Outer Limits Companion* is a must-have for fans of this classic series, and will occupy a place of honor on your shelf next to Mark Zicree's *The Twilight Zone Companion*.

—Brad Abraham

## Cyborgs, Santa Claus and Satan

Fraser A. Sherman

McFarland & Co.

Who could forget Elisabeth Montgomery (of TV's *Scowched*) standing naked and bloodspattered after hacking her parents to pieces in *The Legend of Lizzie Borden*? Answer: Fraser A. Sherman—the author of *Cyborgs, Santa Claus and Satan*. Likewise, there is no mention of the Sally Field slasher film *House for the Holidays*, or 1977's very scary *Force of Evil* starring Lloyd Bridges. And how about Steven Spielberg's highly lauded classic, *Duel*?

Sherman states in his introduction that his book is "inclusive." As evidence, he cites his inclusion of the Harlem Globetrotters on *Gilligan's Island*, which the author describes as "a situation comedy with science fiction elements." But given his claims that the book is "a complete listing of every SF, fantasy or horror movie or mini-series made for or first shown on television," there are an awful lot of omissions.

After all the negatives, you may think I'm advising you to avoid this book. I'm not, but I do want to put it in perspective. The writing here is competent and the opinions of the films often quite interesting. And to be fair,

a mere list of titles of made-for-TV SF, fantasy and horror films could conceivably fill a book as big as this one. But author/publisher hyperbole aside, this is nowhere near a complete listing of TV SF, fantasy and horror films. But even the attempt to catalogue these films makes it a mere resource.



—Dale L. Sproule

## Monster Magazine & Fanzone Collector's Guide #2

Michael W. Pierce &

John M. Ballentine

P&B Publishing

Ever since *Famous Monsters of Filmland* made its historic premiere on stands across America, the horror magazine—and its farangé offshoots—have become a cultural staple. *F&M*'s sudden arrival was the spark that blew up into Horror Movie Fandom, which may explain why the first issue is valued at \$1500 in Michael Pierce and John Ballentine's second edition of their *Monster Magazine and Fanzone Collector's Guide*.

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The book is an exhaustive compendium of maps – glosses, facemes, proverbs, newsletters, one-offs, spin-offs, you name it – produced in over forty-two years of horror, sci-fi and fantasy movie mania. You'll

find info on extremely rare titles like *Shock Tales* and *Slaughter House* alongside more popular and still active titles like *SPX* and *Scream Queens*. Now-defunct mags like *Horror World* and *Chaos*, *Balan's Deep Red* are shuffled in with offerings from overseas like *Dark Side* and *Shivers*, plus yours truly from Canada (*RM* premiere issue, once free, now graded at \$40!), as well as a host of promotional mags that were created around directors like John Carpenter and movies like *X-Files* and *Buffy*.

Lined along with titles and publisher info are graded values for each individual issue (that vary with condition) and there are also a few essays of interest. *Collector's Guide #2* is the genre mag and fanzine bible for the collector and trader, with virtually no stone unturned including utterly unheard-of rarities like *Monsters and Their Friends*, *Mon-*

*stion Annual*, and *Naked? Screaming? Terror?* and too many others to mention.

—Emma Anderson

### Vathek William Beckford Creation Books

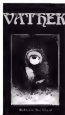
First published in 1816 by the notorious William Beckford, *Vathek* is touted as one of the best productions of Gothic literature of its time. The book follows Caliph Vathek, a greedy tyrant who would give Caligula a run for his money. Vathek feels that running a kingdom, owning a Seraglio full of wives, and having never actually touched the ground, is not enough. But when a hideous wanderer offers him admittance to "the subterranean palace", Vathek does everything he has to, no matter what is required, to get in.

Hedonism and excess are central to the story, as are dark images and magic. Even the gaudy illustrations seem evil. But heavy gothic content aside, there is also a liberal dose of high camp during banquets, dinners, and baths. In fact, none of the characters, save for the demons, are treated with much respect.

Beckford himself enjoyed a considerable

amount of notoriety. He was seen as perverse and a spoiler of youth and decency before he lost his peerage and was scorned out of England for his sexual escapades with a young boy, whom he eventually immortalized as the androgynous young Gulchamraz in the book. With *Vathek*, Beckford proves that the twists of his imagination were by far superior to any social no-no he may have committed during his life. While the story is not as powerful as, say, *Frankenstein*, it's no surprise that such malevolent and comic storytelling would secure centuries of fans. This current re-release should only add to those loyal numbers, because it's as much fun as it is evil.

—Nina Mounitchkua



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Reviews by Greg Kirsch, Sam Henderson, Ben Travençolo and Andrew Lipson



**THE WATCHER**  
Marco Beltrami  
VARESE SARABANDE

The Watcher was a movie about a serial killer who gets tormented by a saintly killer he never captured (see later-but-never). The killer is played by Keanu Reeves, and his performance is anything but it was in Sam Raimi's The Gift, then I'm tracking the movie down. All the same I didn't hear much about it anywhere, which means it probably wasn't that good. Marco Beltrami (Scream) handled the music, which alternates from some great themes to stuff that is pretty much limited to accentuating the chase scenes in the movie. Judging by the soundtrack, there must have been a few. Still, Beltrami's score is progressive and effective, done with synths it managed to sound like a full orchestral score while maintaining (ever so subtly) an industrial band. -GC 8.5



**BLESS THE CHILD**  
Christopher Young  
GNP CRESCENDO RECORDS

For better or worse, horror music seldom makes the grade on its own - it needs a memorable movie to attach itself to before it has a chance at being considered "classic" by the fans. Unfortunately, this means that a good deal of great movie music ends up in the delete

bin, more than likely because the movie sucked. That may be the case for Bless The Child, one of those cash-grab Hollywood horror vehicles that horror fans all but ignored when it hit theaters last year. The film was scored by Christopher Young, one of Tinseltown's major talents when it comes to the dark stuff - his resume includes scores for Species and Coyote, and let's not forget his award-winning music for Melrose and Melrose II. Bless The Child benefits handsomely from Young's sense of mood and emotional pacing, music that tells a story rather than going for those cheap jolts. The plot called for religious overtones, and Young delivered, things ominous and sacred (as tuned here). -GC 8.5



**ANCIENT EVIL - SCREAM OF THE MUMMY**  
Jared DePaquale  
DEPAQUALE ENTERPRISES

Not since The Alien Agenda - Out of the Darkness have I heard such a convoluted title for a film as Ancient Evil - Scream of the Mummy. Title aside, the music seems to have been put together with the right stuff. Composer Jared DePaquale (who brought us music for Full Moon's The Dead Hate the Living! see RMT14) has worked on a limited budget to blow a lot of life into a lackluster script. His score is a showcase of dreary places with a hint of Jerry Goldsmith-styled Orson moments (on Ramin and Morris Nine Lives). Most of it, however, is done with a piano, some woodwind instruments and a good deal of suspense. Keep an eye on the name, once the majors discover this guy, he could be in for a great new wave of horror movie music. The film may be lacking, but Ancient Evil - Scream of the Mummy is a great score, perfect for

injecting a digital-music feel into even the most raspy place. Available directly through the composer at [depaquale@broadwing.com](mailto:depaquale@broadwing.com). -GC 8.5



# Two From The Dark Carnival

## INSANE CLOWN POSSE

Bizarro

Bizarro

ISLAND/UNIVERSAL MUSIC

ICP have come a long way for a couple of Detroit street scumbos. But the makeup isn't just veneer to disguise their less-than-glamorous roots; these guys have obviously stumbled onto something. They've succeeded in creating a wacky and weird universe of deranged games, movies, music, videos—all dressed up in the style of a macabre carnival. As for their popularity, they've decided to release two thematically tied albums—one for each of the ICP brethren, Violent J and Shaggy 2 Dope (in a move that whiffs of those KISS albums of a while back). The difference is that Bizarro and Bizzar will probably be remembered as the Posse's crowning achievement. The first tune that got stuck in my ear, "Till-A-Whit (from Bizarro)," is everything that this rap duo is about: the dark carnival, gangland attitude, commercial success and black humor.

Other songs get behind the face paint to reveal that "insane" refers to schoolyard name-calling and jokes about screwing your mother, rather than anything really psychotic. Nevertheless, there are some real bad moments worth mentioning. My fave (from Bizzar) is about a serial killer who has found fulfillment, and songs featuring Salt Stabbin' and Axx paint things black. On the other hand, gross commercialism is something that ICP could be accused of; both albums are riddled with games, 3-D games, ads for comics and action figures, "Shuggable Thugs," an upcoming movie and links to their many on-line stores. It seems that the Posse has learned a lot about the big bad world. All that doesn't take away from the music, though, which still comes across as brutally dynamic. Bizarro opens with John Carpenter and Alan Howarth's music for *Escape From New York* and Bizzar opens with Chris Young's score from *Urban Legend*. Worthy overtures and an indication that these fellows have a heart, and it's in the right place. —**GC 3.5/5.0**



souls and visages alike. Gothic underpinnings, horns aplenty, and an early Nick Cave lyrical sensibility are the unique western frontier twang with the flavor of a thousand ghostheads galloping gloriously into a crimson Texas sunset, another truly innovative take on the ever diverging ghoulishly scene. If the horrors (and one trombone) from Ghoultown stick to their guns (or gnawing this won't be the last you'll hear from these Dallas devils in the Audio Drome. In the meantime, to find out more about their connection to Jerry Only, a cameo in *American Nightmare* or to buy some dead assy Ghoultown games two-stop on over to www.ghoultown.com. —**TD 3.5/5.0**



OHGR

Web

SYNTHFIRE RECORDS

Glad to hear that Hevis (Skitny Pupp) Ogrs is back making music. When I first heard *Week* (Skitny Pupp) Ogrs and Mark Stahl's OHGR project, I thought it really sounded retro—very industrial new wave with the benefit of twenty years hindsight. Then I learned that *Web* was actually recorded six years ago only to fall into a quagmire of legal trials that locked it in limbo until sometime last year. The duo was freed to at least re-record the original songs, which explains the retro-progressiveness. I heard on the finished product, although it's coated with the nihilistic veneer that has made Ogrs a name at harder industrial circles, Matt is softer, atmospheric synth-prog pop industrial. The album does benefit nicely from Ogrs's twisted imagination, though still exact after all this time. —**GC 3.5/5.0**

disting out the street-scooter grooves to punk rock to roll. One Nation mans a return to the more heavy metal sound of earlier releases (a little less Scooped than it Won't Die). As for as the gore-films lyrics go, this one covers all the bases. *Revenge Of The Lizard Man: Walk-Away, Under The Dirt*—you get the picture. One of the standouts on this disc is a cover of Alice Cooper's 50s movie hit *Teenage Frankenstein*, a rendition



THE RESIDENTS

Idiot Film

East Side Digital

I didn't know this, but most of the weird imagery that pops up in albums from The Residents is taken from their extensive film output. This shouldn't really come as a surprise to the hardcore fan (is there any other when it comes to the band?), pop music's most anonymous, most idiot quartet have been quietly revolutionizing visual media for the past twenty-five years, but it's only been recently that their work has been awarded as such. The band's main "video" is the occasion of the aptly titled *Idiot Film*, a 100 minute opus of the world as seen from the perspective of four eyeballs. Although I can honestly say I didn't come closer to understanding what the Residents music is really about, *Idiot Film* does show a side of the group that is obviously a big part of the overall experience. The DVD often compiles videos from the early period like *The Third Reich and Roll* and *Hello Skinny*, right through the award-winning *Flesh Show* and montages from 1990's *Moosewood*. Too weird to be called canon, *Idiot Film* nevertheless establishes with imagery from the genre, grotesque faces loom out of the digital darkness of *The Gingerbread Man*, and the *One Minute Movies* (close to the music of *The Commercial Album*) play out like gloomy hallucinations. In fact, as there are more than enough deranged sentiments here to at least elicit a case of the creeps, *Idiot Film* also comes with entirely new musical selections of its seventeen selections and restored footage from the *Kluge* film project which the band abandoned after five years. —**RG 3.5/5.0**



ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN

Annie's Grave

Victory Records

I always felt Electric Frankenstein was similar to AFI in that, if it weren't for the artwork and the name, you wouldn't really pick up on the fact that they're some of the biggest horror fans in punk rock. Their balls-out, excessively rude approach to rock n' roll was over my neck heart any day, but the darkness factor just wasn't there. Then along came *Annie's Grave*, with tunes like *Abused Daughter*, *Graveyard Dragrace*, and the title track, all of which reflect a belated homage to the Carzenian brother's 81 pastime, not to beer and babes maybe. *Annie's Grave* is actually only a half original album; the other half is a mix of singles released last year, resulting in an album that's all over the place. The biggest surprise is songs like *Just Can't Kick*, which feature a melodic moodiness unheard of on EP's previous releases, and a notable cover of the Dead Boys' one of the first death rock groups ever. The important thing about Electric

Frankenstein is that whether or not these guys are singing about vampire girlfriends and zombies from hell, with EP punk metal, hardcore and even (gasp!) grunge are formulaically synthesized to create a living breathing rock n' machine hell-bent on the mindless destruction of every musical trend of the past decade. —**AL 3.5/5.0**



GHOULTOWN

Tales From the Dead West

Angry Planet Records

These ghosts dash right, all through the night, deep in the heart of Texas. In a secret setting, far away from the scorching Dallas sun, the residents of Ghoultown spin game and ghostly Tales from the Dead West. Court Lyle, Queens deliriums and the nose of the Tex-Mex vampire ride and rope are a high zombie style with fast cow-punked, tequila-soaked spicy death rattle about ghosts and graves, forlorn drillers and all kinds of deliriums with the devil. Romantic Spanish guitar and accompanied jazzy percussion romanticize the macabre sound into an all-out battle cry for lost



IMPALER

One Nation Under Ground

The Root of All Evil

Originally incarnated in the early eighties, but going their strongest on this side of the mid-nineties, *Impaler* prove they still have what it takes when it comes to

that actually lends some respectability to Alice's Constrictor album. It seems like these guys pay respect to The Coup a lot, and it's no wonder. If there's a punk rock movement in shock rock, Impaler are the undisputed heavyweight champions. -AL 8.8.8.1/2



**SUICIDE COMMANDO**  
Mindtrip  
Metropolis Records

Somewhere deep inside the void where harsh techno meets dark industrial lurks Suicide Commando. The single-planet brainchild of Belgium's one-man gang, Johan Van Roy, SC have previously drawn comparisons to bands like Front Line Assembly. On *Mindtrip*, a relentless barrage of grinding beats, piercing digital effects and merciless interference all strangely manage to maintain a peculiar simplicity amidst the chase. This type of raw electro-splatter fits with straight industrial on occasion, but the incorporation of melodic keys keeps

things surprisingly dance floor-friendly. A musical tic-fit for electro junkies joining for a fresh shot of agonized rhapsody. Check out *Helixiac*, *Comatose Delusion* (RMP18) and *Love Breeds Suicide*. -TP 8.8.8.8



**THEATRE OF THE MACABRE**  
A Paradise in Flesh & Blood  
Root of All Evil Records

This little gem of sickness and evil will create some excitement for featuring master dark artist and luxury folder Le Rue Delashay, proved earlier in RMP17. Delashay's contributions are hands down the strongest aspects of TOTM, especially his ability to create surreal haunted house soundscapes that add a creepy candlelight glow over the brutal aggression and clanging guitar work found on *A Paradise in Flesh & Blood*. Much of this album sounds unproduced but that only adds to its 9-11m spookshow charm. TOTM's is

admittedly not one of the best black metal outfits around, but Delashay's presence ensures that it succeeds as an intense and true gothic outfit, putting genuine fear past the sheer evil of their countless contemporaries. -AL 8.8.8.8.8



**BRUJERIA**  
Brujeria  
Roadrunner/Scow Coon

Mexican death metal doesn't get any deadier than Brujeria (trans: Witchcraft), a band that traces its history to those drug-addled Mexican witches who were busted in Matamoros in 1988 after they chopped up and cooked a couple of the locals. Brujeria formed shortly after, taking pro-drug Satanic Zapata's militarism to the pulse of death metal. All things told, not hugely original for the sub-genre, but the band was good enough to secure the title of reigning princes of dark metal south of the Rio Grande. Some hardcore lyrics (in Spanish) and harder imagery (real-life death stuff) make Brujeria a pretty tough act to beat when it comes to politically-minded death metal. -GC 8.8.8



**CONTAMINATED 3.0**  
Various  
Relapse Records

Extreme music has come into its own in very recent years, creating a world of sound very far removed from anything mainstream, or at times, even discernible. If there's one label that has really given a rise to these acts, it's this one. So here it is, two discs, fifty-one tracks of everything under the sun: chaotic death metal, grotesque grind, guttural noise-core. I really don't know where it all begins or ends. Suffice it to say that virtually all of these acts push the envelope on music creativity and sometimes even acceptability. There's the pulverizing death grind and heavy Egyptian schtick of Nile, the morbid crush of Incantation, the brainlessly sickening gore-grind of Exhumed, and my

favourite, the most sickeningly heavy band ever: Morrican, who pay tribute to both Leatherface (Chainsaw Demon-bear) and Fido (House By The Cemetery). I take it the idea here is that Contaminated 3.0 serves as a soundtrack while North America slowly decays and our moral fabric is torn away. Hey, you might as well have good music to listen to while the world goes to hell. -AL 8.8.8.8.1/2



**ROTTING CHRIST**  
Rotting Christ  
Century Media

Despite the obvious appeal of a band calling themselves Rotting Christ, these Greek Satan-baiters have created some pretty satisfying dark metal on *Khronos*. Not your typical brutal death metal, Rotting Christ do their best to make devil worship beautiful through a sound that is slightly gothic, very atmospheric, but still highly aggressive. Not the best in the genre, the quartet maintains its spot in the hellfire spotlight by actually bringing some diversity to death metal. Just don't expect to see these guys around much if you live in North America as their name does tend to piss off more than a few people. -AL 8.8.8.8



**LAMB OF GOD**  
New American Gospel  
FROTHETIC/  
METAL BLADE RECORDS

You know it's going to be a beautiful day in the neighborhood when the new album by Lamb of God lands in your lap. Those of you familiar with the group know by now that LOG is merely a new handle for the band once known as Burn the Priest (possibly one of the best names for any band ever). But for those of you unfamiliar with them, be aware that LOG are not merely another blasphemous, Satan-worshipping metal outfit. As the album title suggests, *New American Gospel* is a nihilistic and cynical look at society, one that would be better off on

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the wrong side of murder. Check out The Subtle Arts Of Murder And Persuasion, Terror Aid Hubbs In The House Of Frank Potard and Black Label for your daily sermon of abhorrence. Given the fact that LOG are easily one of the most talented and creative acts in the realm of heavy music, combining grind, hardcore, doom and all things crushing, their uniquely dark lyrics soaked in piling there at the very top of aggressive music's expansive community. This is a good. This is very good. **-AL 8.8.8.8**



**THEATRE OF TRAGEDY**  
Musique  
**NUCLEAR BLAST**

For some reason I don't remember Theatre of Tragedy ever being an industrial band. Not that this is pure industrial; the emphasis of Musique is toward a zombie, gothic form of techno, fuelled by metallic guitars. The band's roots are in the doom division, which becomes pre-

ty obvious with song titles like Lament Of The Pershing Roses. Musique apparently marks a new direction for the group, toward a niche in the Metalcore vein. Unfortunately that means TOT will probably get lost in the crowd, considering there's really nothing to set them apart from the rest of the dark electronic movement. **-AL 8.8.12**



**NOCTURNAL RITES**  
Afterlife  
Century Media Records

Also! A Swedish metal band that doesn't sound exactly like Iron Maiden or Hellwoken. Which is not to say they don't sound like them, just not exactly like them. The high pitch leads out of the title track with a nice regression into a dark brooding piano arrangement. Unfortunately the double bass-wielding six piece slip right back into the same tired anthem-racing, power-chorded, faltering that truly test waste in the air.

toothed mockery of bands like Poseidon and Foster Pustogor. Singer Johnny Linkous, an uncompromising vocal combination of Rob Halford and Dave Mustaine, brings images of Spandex Man-but-phases and grinding while wailing "Wake up dead, it's calling/Wake up dead, I'm telling/Wake up dead alive!" Unfamiliar with their back catalogue, I'm unable to substantiate their claim of an updated modern approach on Afterlife, but their exhausting overuse of artificial harmonies should ensure that no self-respecting metal fan will take them too seriously in the year 2001. Afterlife is musically light and technically accomplished but truly does not rock. For this type of melodic speed metal, the album sounds good - too bad it's not a good sound. **-TD 8.8**



**CHILDREN OF BODOM**  
Follow the Reaper  
Nuclear Blast

Oh, how dark my world would be without the beautiful sounds of melodic death metal! As goofy as a lot of this music is, there will always be a warm spot in my heart for the likes of In Flames, Dark Tranquillity and in this case, Finland's Children of Bodom. These guys seemingly never tire of their name as Follow the Reaper remains a collection of soaring anthems of the horrors that await anyone who dares the icy Lake Bodom. The melodies are positively atrocious while the heavy crunch and demonic vocals are just what the devil ordered. Sure, it's overdone, but the music gave me goosebumps and created feelings equal to the first time I saw Evil Dead. **-AL 8.8.8.8**



**THE FORSAKEN**  
Manifest of Hate  
Century Media

American artist Mike Bohatch contributed some pretty morose artwork to Manifest of Hate, the official debut by Sweden's new death metal hopefuls: The Forsaken. That sense of morbidity pre-

valts throughout the album as songs deal mostly with betrayal, loathing, and all things dark and malignant. If progressive death metal is your thing, then these guys deserve some hype as the next big thing. Fun songwriting coupled with a raw level of intensity and atmosphere leads to a thoroughly pleasing listening experience from beginning to end. Equal parts Arch Enemy and The Crown Men of Hate, Manifest is mandatory for those of you who dig the heavy stuff. These guys are pretty funny looking, but if their music is any indication, we'd best remain on their side. **-AL 8.8.8.8**



**LIZZY BORDEN**  
Deal With The Devil  
Metal Blade Records

You're probably asking yourself why the hell we would bother reviewing the new Lizzy Borden album (a concept horrifying in and of itself). Really, the only thing that blocked the path of the CD from my hand is the junk pile on which my eye noticed that it features a cover track of Alice Cooper's Generation Landside (what is it with Cooper covers this issue?). Then I remembered who these guys actually are. Lizzy Borden was an integral part of the shock rock movement in the early '80s (a time that produced virtually nothing good) and was surpassed in notoriety only by Mr. Big and Son Jovi. Sure, these guys named themselves after a particularly chilling moment in American history, and they liked using words like "terror" and "murder" a whole lot on their albums, but come on, we all know bar metal has no place in the year 2001. The scariest part of Deal is the fact that Todd McFarlane actually did the cover artwork. That his name appears only on the inside of the CD speaks for itself. **-AL 8**



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## Children Of Bodom



**Follow The Reaper**

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## GAMES by Marco Piccola

MACOS: *Carnivore* in *Carnivore*; *Chaos* in *Chaos*; *Vegas* in *Vegas*



## IT SLICES, IT DICES, AND THAT'S PRETTY MUCH IT

### Blade

Activision and Marvel  
Sony Playstation

It only took me a few minutes to realize that the new game based on a cool vampire movie was going to be a letdown. The intro graphics are all executed, the game play graphics are no better and there is little ambience created throughout. Bottom line: this is a piss-poor shoot-'em-up - so gore, no blood, no sense - with the Blade name slapped on it. Some indistinguishable techno-whatever music adds to the monotony, but I won't bore you with the details of cops and creatures you end up having to fight.

If you love Blade, and I mean necessarily love Blade, then maybe, just maybe, you'll find this game a lower-case ok. [www.activision.com](http://www.activision.com) or [www.marvel.com](http://www.marvel.com)

Playability: Omnivore Graphics: Vegan Shivers: Vegan

## A WEREWOLVES' COMPANION

Werewolf: Storytellers Companion  
White Wolf Game Studios  
Role-playing Source Book

Werewolf is the ideal Storyteller supplement. It contains tons of extra information designed to enhance the Storyteller's game. Extra details on Stargazers, coven and wolf life along with additional weapons and rules on underwater combat. What's more, it comes with a very handy four-panel screen listing the most often referenced charts and tables. If you're a Storyteller or want to be one, it's a must.

Playability: Carnivore Graphics: Omnivore Shivers: Omnivore



## MALICE IN WONDERLAND

### Alice

Electronic Arts and  
Rogue Entertainment  
PC Game

I heard a lot about this game (see Roadkill From the Info Highway - RMT19) prior to getting a copy at the office and, let me tell you, it's a real masterpiece of creepy graphics and horror atmos-

pheres. Based around Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice is a third person action-adventure game that offers players a dark, compelling storyline and a surreal journey through a Wonderland gone mad.

Of course, you play Alice - a sweetie-started girl who retreats into a troubled world after her family is wiped out in a house fire. Armed with a toy chest of weapon/toy goodies (such as Dement Dice and a Croquet Mallet), you wander through some very odd places (lost out in fifteen diverse settings), encountering truly twisted versions of the Cheshire Cat, the Mad Hatter and Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum. It turns out that Alice is a kind of marmoset messiah who is supposed to release the oppressed inhabitants of Wonderland, which kind of works in with the psychology of the whole thing.

Alice is powered by the Quake II engine, which allows for top-notch visuals that complement these dimensional characters and cool narratives. Adding to the atmosphere is an original collection of eerie instrumentals composed and produced by former NIN drummer Chris Vienna. [www.ea.com](http://www.ea.com)

Playability: Carnivore Graphics: Carnivore Shivers: Carnivore



## NOT EVIL ENOUGH

Evil Dead - Hail to the King  
THQ and Heavy Iron Studios  
Sony Playstation

Man, I love The Evil Dead. The thought of playing Ash and going chainsaw-to-skull against the undead hordes makes my dreams run red. So how come I felt like I was watching blood dry instead of bringing eternal death to the army of darkness on my PlayStation? I pretty much had to bash my head into a wrought iron table to get any feeling out of the gaming experience.

Hail to the King offers graphics that are barely adequate, which really compromises whatever gore there might have been in the drawing room (and my guess is that there must have been a lot). Also, it's a bitch to control. You're never sure where you're aiming and the character moves awkwardly. Limited stack moves and a slow moving character drag the game on through no music, few sound effects and not much of a plot to speak of. Sorry everyone, this one's boring. [www.thq.com](http://www.thq.com)

Playability: Vegan  
Graphics: Vegan  
Shivers: Vegan



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# MISS GENTILBELLE

USA 1955

by Charles Beaumont  
Originally published in 1955

Miss Gentilbelle lives in a large house far from town. When you live with Miss Gentilbelle, you are expected to be courteous and kind, and to follow her rules, like any good little girl should. Miss Gentilbelle expects everyone to follow her rules. And when you don't, Miss Gentilbelle will punish you. She will punish you and the small, helpless creatures you love more than anything else in the world.

The name Charles Beaumont may be unfamiliar at first glance. But if you are a fan of horror and the macabre, then there's little doubt you're familiar with his work. Born Charles Leroy Nutt in 1929, Beaumont spent barely forty years on this earth before a very premature death, but in that brief span he wrote some of the greatest horror and SF tales of the last fifty years. He was also the unofficial ringleader of a group of writers (collectively referred to as "The Green Hand" and "The Southern California Screamers") which also included Richard Matheson (*I Am Legend*), George Clayton Johnson and William F. Nolan (*Logan's Run*), and the incorporeal Rod Serling (*The Twilight Zone*). Indeed, this group provided nearly all of the episodes of that landmark series, and Beaumont's macabre tales on life and wicked sense of humor provided some of its most memorable tales: *The Howling Man*, *Perchance to Dream* and *The Jungle among them*. The macabre stories he wrote often seemed to be drawn from his life; this was especially true of a tale of a young boy lashed over by his domineering mother, *Miss Gentilbelle*.

The story first appeared in the collection *The Hunger and Other Stories* and leaves an indelible impression some forty-five years later. The young narrator might as well be Beaumont himself, as the lines between fiction and the writer's own documented misery are significantly blurred. His early childhood in Chicago was dominated by his mother, who purportedly dressed him in girl's clothes and (on more than one occasion) killed his pets as a form of punishment.

Set in a hazy and gothic South, the story's protagonist, Robert, is raised at his plantation house, far from the eyes of others. His world is utterly controlled by his mother, referred to only as Miss Gentilbelle. Her word is the law, and Robert is dressed as a girl, called "Robert-a", and educated as such by Miss Gentilbelle. Yet Robert is a boy, and frequently engages in "un-lady like" activities, like climbing trees and keeping toads and frogs as pets. Miss Gentilbelle makes Robert understand that what she does is for his good. His punishments are brought down with disciplinary zeal that is unrelenting and horrifying, not because his mother hates him, but because Miss Gentilbelle loves him so much.

First his puppy Edna, then his pet possum Margaret, are punished.



Original illustration by Vincent Marcone

It is Robert's final act of defying Miss Gentilbelle's commands, and she will not be disobeyed. It is not until Robert meets Dinkie, a blind hand who befriends him, that the boy begins to dream of a world outside the plantation home, where he can dress like a boy and live free from the presence of his mother. Through Dinkie's friendship, Robert becomes cognizant of an outside world that will change everything for him.

Tragically, there can be no escape for Robert. And when the time comes for him to "punish" Miss Gentilbelle like she forced him to punish his pets for his misdeeds, the lack of pathos or poetic justice leaves the reader drained. It is a sad story, yet a profoundly moving one as well.



As early as 1963 Beaumont was beginning to display the symptoms of what was to develop into a form of Alzheimer's disease. Eventually he was unable to write any longer — some of his final *Twilight Zone* episodes were ghost written by his fellow writers, so his family would get the money — and a stellar writing career was cut short. By early 1967, Charles Beaumont had succumbed to the disease.

The type of stories Beaumont wrote were often anchored in the territory of "what if?" What if a prisoner in a monastery was in fact Satan? What if a dream could kill you? What if a voodoo curse could reach all the

way to the streets of Manhattan? Perhaps the question many fans of his work ask themselves is: what if Beaumont were still with us today? What stories would he still have to tell? We will never know the answer, but we can take comfort in the literary legacy he left us. Genre fans and writers will forever live in his shadow.

—Brad Achenbach

# STEPHEN KING'S F13



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